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Abstract

An Ethnographic Investigation of Students' and Parents' Perceptions of their International School Experiences

By Philip Harrington

First Supervisor: Dr Anwei Feng

Second Supervisor: Professor Carl Bagley

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctorate of Education

School of Education
Durham University
2007



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Abstract

This thesis uses ethnographic interviews to investigate students' and parents' perceptions of an isolated international school in China and their life in the Test International School (TIS) expatriate community (TIS is a pseudonym).

Due to the highly mobile and transient nature of the school population being researched, an ethnographic interview (Spradley 1979) process has been used. A group of five parents and eight international school students were interviewed several times during a six month period (a combined total of 36 interviews) in an attempt to locate their theories of education, their perceptions of life at international school and the expatriate community, and their understanding of the relative benefits/disadvantages of international life compared to their home countries.

The purpose of this research is to increase understanding of how parents and students perceive international school education and how their lives in the isolated expatriate school community affects their views and attitudes. Expatriate relocation can be demanding and though multilingual and multicultural challenges can provide enriching experiences, they can also contribute to the stresses of overseas life. It is hoped that the exploration of participants' stories will facilitate deeper understanding of the complexity of mobile expatriate life so that current teaching practices can be improved.

We can see from the data many positive aspects of an international school experience, however the findings also indicate the prevalence of a passive form of cultural conflict at TIS international school, most visible between the Korean and non-Korean groups, as well as a 'bubble effect' as expatriates living in compounds become isolated from the local community, which in some cases is seen to be responsible for developing strong negative attitudes towards the host population. These two phenomena threaten the ideals of internationalism which international schools seek to promote.

Declaration

This thesis is my own work and has not been offered previously in candidature at this or any other university.

Acknowledgments

My greatest thanks goes to Dr Carin Harrington for her endless patience, encouragement and love, and to our wonderful children Érin and Cúchulain for their sense of humour and reminding me about the most important things in life. Special thanks to Tom and Nora Harrington for their untiring support and generosity.

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Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Anwei Feng for his untiring support, critical insights and for taking a genuine interest in my studies and welfare, for without his guidance and sound advice I would not have been able to complete this thesis. *Xiexie Nin.*

Why did he think adding meant increase?
To me it was dilution. Where do these
Innate assumptions come from? Not from what
We think truest, or most want to do
(From *Dockery and Son* by Philip Larkin)

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AP	Advanced Placement
CIS	Council of International Schools
C1	Culture 1 (home or first or dominant culture)
DP	Diploma Programme
ECIS	European Council of International Schools
ESL	English as a Second Language
HL	Home Language
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organisation
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
L1	Language 1 (home or first or dominant language)
MYP	Middle Years Programme
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NCCT	National Centre for Curriculum and Textbooks
TCK	Third Culture Kid
TIS	Test International School. The school used in the thesis has not been named. This is to maintain the anonymity of the participants and so is referred to as Test International School (TIS).
PD	Professional Development
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PYP	Primary Years Programme
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMT	Senior Management Team
TA	Teaching Assistant

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis. Chapter 2 focuses on existing literature, Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the methodology and context of the research, Chapters 4 to 6 discuss the findings of this study and their significance and Chapter 7 provides a final discussion and conclusion.

1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The rapid increase in the number of international schools as a by-product of increased globalisation has been well documented, as can be seen by the volume of research carried out within the last ten years. Researchers have endeavoured to illuminate and evaluate the deliberate ideological drive of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) towards promoting internationalism and creating global citizens (Hayden, Rancic and Thompson 2000, Philips 2002, Drake 2004, Fail, Thompson and Walker 2004). Attempts have also been made to understand how internationalism has impacted on international school students (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Fail *et al.* 2004), the influence of globalisation on international schools (Cambridge 2002a, Bottery 2006), perceptions of internationalism (Hinrichs 2003, Hayden *et al.* 2000, Hayden, Thompson and Williams 2003, Fail *et al.* 2004,) the specific learning challenges for highly mobile children (Kusuma-Powell 2004), reasons for 'parents' selection of international schools (MacKenzie, Hayden and Thompson 2003, Potter and Hayden 2004), cultural dissonance (Dimmock and Walker 2000, Allan 2002 and 2003, Drake 2004), how a multicultural environment can shape identities (Mills 2001, Allan 2002, Drake 2004, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) and, more specifically, the Third Culture Kid (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Fail *et al.* 2004, Zilber 2004).

Yet, despite the amount of research that has been carried out, this is an area that requires much more attention as current research in this field is struggling to keep pace with the rapid increase in international schools, both in numbers of schools and numbers of students. Therefore, building on existing research, this thesis has focused on students' and parents' perceptions, perspectives and theories of their international school experience.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS

Through the use of grounded theory (Glaser and Straus 1967) and ethnographic interview methodology (Spradley 1979) I wanted to keep the research aims open so that hypotheses could emerge during the research process. Yet, from the outset I had some general concerns which I wanted to address: To what extent does the international school promote international-mindedness? How does the school curriculum reflect the objectives set out by the IBO? To what degree is knowledge of the phenomenon of Third Culture Kids significant for an international school and how does time at an international school impact on identity? Are children advantaged or disadvantaged by attending an international school with a highly mobile population compared to their home-country schools?

I was interested in uncovering parents' and students' perceptions of their international school experience so I could use the increased understanding to benefit future practice. Relatively little is known of the perspectives of international students and parents, and given the rapid increase in international schools, and the huge numbers who may be impacted in future years, more research is clearly needed. Therefore the purpose of this study is to locate and explore their theories, because it is through increased knowledge of the perceptions of the receivers of international school education that teaching practices can be improved.

1.3 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The international school used in the study is a small to medium sized school with 355 students from PreK to Grade 12 (Year 13). It is located in a rapidly developing city in China. The international school is in an isolated position in terms of consisting of expatriates living in China, so there is no clear separation between school time and home time as the vast majority of students, parents and teachers live in four compounds on the outskirts of the city. This gives the international school added significance in the forming of friendships and the development of international identities with much of the discussions of participants demonstrating the overlap between home and school life.

The rate of turnover for staff, students and parents is high, which leads to the transient nature of international life featuring in the analysis and discussion. As the only international school in the area, it has an open door policy and will accept all students wishing to enrol providing they have an overseas passport (this is a Chinese regulation).

Students and their families tend to be educated middle-class professionals from various parts of the world and are in China for work reasons. Full details of nationalities and numbers are provided in Chapter 3 and the appendices.

1.4 A DEFINITION OF 'INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'

Judith Guy, the regional director of the IBO in Asia, was asked at the IBO Global Languages Convention (2006) to estimate how many international schools are currently in operation. Her answer was, "It depends on what you mean by an international school".

The term 'international school' refers to a wide variety of educational institutions, and the difficulty with creating and agreeing on a comprehensive definition of international education is that the phrase has various nuances and an assortment of suggested and possible meanings;

"International education is frequently discussed in the context of the related field of comparative education, but a different sense of the term has also developed in the context of the theory and practice of education in international schools and other institutions." (Cambridge and Thompson 2004: 161).

What makes defining international schools so complicated is that they are autonomous entities; and providing they comply with the laws and regulations of the host country, can be set up by anyone, for whatever purpose, either as an educational establishment or as is becoming more common, as a business. There is not a trans-national regulatory body or other control mechanism for overseeing standards or operations; the nearest equivalent is optional entry into the IBO or one of the international accreditation agencies. As shall be explored in more detail in Chapter 2, there are numerous types of ventures all using the name 'international school' but having little in common with each other.

Therefore, in this thesis, using parameters similar to those set by Zilber (2005), the term 'international school' refers to those schools that identify themselves as such and are non-national overseas schools either offering one of the International Baccalaureate programmes and/or recognised by a school accreditation agency e.g. Council of International Schools (CIS), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The justifications for this narrow and specific definition are discussed in Chapter 2. However, even within these parameters, there are numerous types of institutions and these are also discussed in the next chapter.

1.5 RESEARCH METHOD

Given the complexities and variables of transient expatriate life and the high turnover of the student and staff populations of Test International School (TIS), a pseudo name for the school being used in the study, it was decided at the outset that the most appropriate methodology is a qualitative ethnographic approach. While this approach has its drawbacks, as shall be discussed in Chapter 3, it is the most suitable for conducting an in-depth analysis of a single location with many variables.

The interviews took place from May 2006 to October 2006. 13 participants were interviewed over a period of six months, with each having between 1 and 4 interviews. By applying Spradley's 'ethnographic interview' methodology, participants were interviewed several times in order for them to clarify their findings and ideas. Some participants also participated in follow-up discussions, as is explained in Chapter 3.

There were four rounds of interviews. The first was 'open' with 'broad-spectrum' questions. A useful starting point for the interviews was to discuss international schools, international life, language and culture in order to locate theories about the international school experience. Participants were asked to talk at length about their overseas experience and to consider how the perceived benefits and losses may be measured. By using ethnographic interview methodology, it was the expectation that grounded theory (Glaser and Straus 1967) would emerge.

The second round of interviews was to allow the participants to respond directly to the transcripts and analysis of the first interview. In the third round I reported the general ideas and emerging trends from the respondents as a group; this was to allow the participants to become active in the research process, so they could clarify what had been said. These confirmations or disagreements were to help with 'internal' triangulation of my analysis of all the transcripts, not just individual accounts. The fourth round was for participants to respond to the hypotheses that emerged.

In total 36 interviews were carried out in 33 sessions; all were one-to-one interviews except for Diana and Susan who were together for two sessions, and Harold and Linda together for one. Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, coded and analysed. Interviews lasted between 25 and 60 minutes and the transcripts were between 2000 and 5000 words each. The final part of the analysis was the write-up.

The findings demonstrated conflicting perspectives both within individuals who

presented contradictory ideas, as well as accounts of conflict between cultural groups and dissonance between the school's aims and the behaviours reported. There were positive reports of students being happy about overseas schooling, being in a friendly environment and having opportunities for travel and sharing cultures. In contrast, there were strong negative attitudes that emerged regarding attitudes towards the host country's people and language, the distinct division between the Korean and non-Korean groups of the school and the relevance of the school's curriculum.

2 THE ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LIFE

The function of this chapter is to provide a context for this thesis within the current research into international schools and areas that strongly impact on international school children such as high mobility, identity and academic provision. Drawing on existing literature to define and discuss key concepts of international school life, it opens with an exploration of Third Culture Kids (TCKs); while not being a phenomenon exclusive to international schools, it does describe all the children at the Test International School (TIS) and so it is fitting that this area is explored in some depth as it provides the foundation for the ethnographic analysis. The rest of this chapter is devoted to other aspects of international schools including the history and role of the International Baccalaureate Organisation which has become established as the key curriculum provider for international schools; issues of language and culture, and areas of conflict in a multicultural context.

Researcher reactivity is the effect on that which is being researched by the presence of the researcher at the scene (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Hammersley 1991, 1992, Pole and Morrison 2003). Therefore, I wish to clarify that the first draft of this literature review section was completed some months before the ethnographic interviews, data analysis and theory construction commenced. It is important to establish that there was a gap between the reading of the literature about international schools and the analysis of the transcripts, so that I could be fully immersed in the participants' realities rather than imposing ideas drawn from the reading. This chapter was redrafted during the thesis write-up stage at which time elements of the literature were then incorporated into the analysis of the ethnographic interviews. After the interviews and transcriptions were completed and during the analysis stages, fresh literature searches were conducted in the light of the subjects highlighted by the interviewees. The initial review had been general, an attempt to locate trends among the literature but the second round of searches was more specifically focused on topics raised by the participants.

The significance of this thesis and other recent studies examining various aspects of international schools is apparent given the recent growth in international school numbers. The rapid increase is evident; in 2004 Drake reported 1,351 schools worldwide registered to offer one of the IBO programmes (Drake 2004), and this number has grown

to 1,890 schools in 124 countries with an estimated 486,000 students aged 3 to 19 years on one or other of the three programmes (IBO website October 2006). However, these figures are not reliable indicators of numbers of international school students as the totals include national schools which are also adopting the IB Diploma.

In August 1999, Beijing had four English medium international schools. According to the World Bank, China's economy grew at 8.3% annually from 1994 to 2004 (Yamato and Bray 2006) and by August 2006, 18 different types of English medium international schools were advertising in the City Weekend expatriate magazine for Beijing residents (www.cityweekend.com.cn). These included two Christian schools, one Australian, one Singaporean, and five British (Harrow, Dulwich, two Eton schools and the British School). Some schools are PreK-6 only, some Grade 6-12 and others are PreK-12. Ten of the schools offer one or more of the IBO programmes; Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP). Four offer the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) based on the English GCSE's. Beijing's two non-profit schools are the two oldest, with all the schools set up since 1999, being for-profit schools. All the schools charge up to US\$ 20,000 per student per year, as Yamato and Bray's (2006) study of international schools in Shanghai demonstrates. It is this tuition cost which accounts for the large numbers of international schools being set up as profit making business ventures; the 33 international schools in China registered with CIS generate a combined annual tuition turnover of US\$273.7 million (MacDonald 2006).

Should such expansion continue, MacDonald (2006) predicts international schools will continue to grow both in numbers and in size as long as world trade increases, with a strong correlation between the two. It is, therefore, probable that international schools will make an increasingly significant impact on numerous societies around the world.

2.1 THIRD CULTURE KIDS

Numerous metaphors have been used to describe the post-modern phenomenon of the children of international workers as individuals not belonging to traditional cultural groups (Zilber 2004) but the most common and widely accepted term is 'Third Culture Kids' (TCKs). The term was first used by Useem and Useem in the 1950s and 60s to describe American children of overseas military and missionary families. More recently,

this has been increasingly applied to international school students (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Straffon 2002, Fail *et al.* 2004, Zilber 2004). Despite becoming widely used, as with much of the terminology employed in social sciences research, it can mean many different things to different people and has been used to describe immigrant children, expatriate children and children whose parents are from two different nationalities. I use the term in its broadest sense, to describe people who identify with two or more cultures and so this covers children living overseas, immigrants and families with parents from two different countries or cultures. This is important as literature about immigrants and the descriptions of struggles for dominance between groups, struggles for the identity of the individual and for minority groups have relevance for international school children.

Pollock and Van Reken (1999) define TCKs as those who have lived for a major part of their formative years overseas, away from their parents' home country, and so lack a sense of full ownership or connection with any specific culture while being able to relate to all. Therefore their "...sense of belonging is in relation to others of similar experience" (Pollock and Van Reken 1999), rather than with either their parents' culture (first culture) or places in which they have been raised (second culture). Instead, the third culture is located in the 'sense' that they do not belong anywhere *and* everywhere; or have a multiple sense of belonging (Straffon 2002, Fail *et al.* 2004); and as such they are purportedly more readily able to identify with others who have had the same experience rather than with either their first or second culture counterparts.

Pollock and Van Reken (1999) suggest the identity created by many TCKs is a notional, national identity based on their parents' culture, which is only truly challenged on the point of returning to live in their home country. This is when the TCK realises that what they have constructed may not be the identity they have perceived for so long and so they experience a painful sense of displacement (Fail *et al.* 2004).

Bell (1997) provides a selection of interviews with American returnees describing their experiences. Bell is a journalist and does not claim to be writing an academic text, although her choice of extracts is very telling in that she has grouped together the key areas of concern in identifying trends amongst her interviewees to demonstrate a regular pattern; again a sense of 'not belonging' and the difficulties of re-entry to American culture. The participants in Bell (1997), Pollock and Van Reken (1999) and Fail *et al.*'s (2004) studies all noted that these feelings did not diminish with time. The descriptions of

reverse culture shock (ibid) highlight the difficulties of students returning to their home country to find they do not have the necessary cultural references or understanding of social norms required to fully assimilate.

Several TCKs reported the need to learn culturally appropriate behaviours on their return to their home country and the problems and dilemmas it caused e.g. toilet protocols, greetings, misunderstood sexual body language, hand gestures, eating habits, queuing, classroom behaviours etc. (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999). Numerous complex factors such as peer pressures and these social blunders led to the need to negotiate or construct (new) identities. TCKs, having formed international identities on their arrival at international school, are then pressured to re-form or create socially acceptable home identities on their return, with the main reported difficulty of returning TCKs being the managing of their social identities in order to avoid becoming marginalised (Fail *et al.* 2004).

There are areas where alternative explanations for the TCK experience may also be considered. The first is the notion of the shared identity or sense of belonging to each other; this common bond could also be described as a heightened shared understanding rather than a genuine connection, which could equally apply to any other strangers who have had a shared experience; for example, childbirth, running a marathon, death of a loved one. Of course, a child who has lived overseas can relate to others who have had the same experience, but that does not automatically mean all TCKs have a shared culture. It is perhaps more appropriate to consider each TCK as having an individualised and personal culture, which may also account for another main characteristic described as the 'sense of displacement' (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). Secondly, it is not only TCKs who can make *faux pas* or lack the social skills needed for new experiences, as feelings of dislocation can be felt by all people in all societies at all times e.g. refugees, mixed culture/race children, immigrants, people with alternative lifestyles or even teenagers; these are not TCK experiences only.

It would be illuminating if follow up studies of TCKs' reinsertion moved away from an American focus as Allan (2002) and Drake (2004) make the point that the challenges for students returning to collectivist societies such as Japan, Korea and China are very different from those returning to individualistic societies where the returnee's international experience makes their uniqueness something of value.

2.1.1 NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITY

The construction of identities in a multicultural context in national settings has been well documented (Mills 2001, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) but there is significantly less research available from international school environments. Therefore, in this section I draw on studies of identity negotiation for immigrants where they have relevance for international school children. Immigrants and international school children vary hugely in socio-economic terms, however, while the differences in terms of power relationships with the local community, socialisation, economic freedoms and educational aspirations can greatly differ, they can all be crucial factors in identity negotiation.

Language and cultural ideologies are not neutral and become more visible in multicultural societies, where identities are negotiated as a result of conflict (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). In this context the divergence is between the dominant and minor languages and cultures; and while this is the opportunity to “acquire cultural competence based on two cultural systems”, (Byram 1998) it can also mean a child does not adequately acquire either. To clarify this, it is the internal conflict of the child within the multilingual and multicultural context where they need to build relationships and friendships in order to survive and function; both on an individual level and within groups (Byram 2003). The relationships are built on the common ground where children can establish communication and interact, leading to the forming of identities appropriate for the setting. Mills (2001) demonstrates this in her study of children reporting the need for appropriate identities for different situations. Her study of second and third generation Pakistani children in England focuses on attempts to develop a culture 1 (C1) Pakistani identity through the daily use of language 1 (L1) in social, family and interpersonal situations. As with TCKs in international schools, immigrant children seek to manage their various cultures and identities (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999)

“A further issue of concern in the consideration of growing up bilingually and identity formation is the extent to which bilingual people also become bicultural. Biculturalism, in the sense of two distinct cultures co-existing or combining, in some way, in one individual, is related to that individual’s sense of identity.” (Mills 2001: 389).

Mills (2001) reports the British-Pakistani children identified their own multiple identities and considered the ways their languages and language usages contribute to their

multiple identities. The dilemma for these children and their families was in balancing their Pakistani traditions, religions, languages and cultures with a need to have the appropriate socialisation and formal education to be academically and financially successful in England, a scenario that appears to effectively describe the international school child's dilemma. This was reinforced at the IBO Global Language Conference in Singapore in April 2006 when six international school students addressed the delegates and described their experiences of international schools. Each had a different background and life history but converged when describing their language and cultural differences on arrival and the need to be accepted and fit in to be successful. They discussed ways in which they had changed and how they needed to learn survival strategies both for integrating into the school and on return to their home countries.

Cultural identity in a multicultural environment is difficult to identify as it is hard to ascertain where a first or home culture (C1) ends, or has been eroded and where it has been replaced or enriched. One feature of the crossover between the two complex phenomena of multiculturalism and international schools is the cultural 'hotpot' or 'melting pot';

"The overall effect would be a linguistic and cultural blending, with each student exhibiting characteristics from their own linguistic and cultural background, blended with characteristics from the other linguistic and cultural backgrounds with which they had been in contact." (Astill and Keeves 1999: 11).

Cultures are not stable but ever changing (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) and cultural influences can affect all groups present. Although describing immigrants in their study of Vietnamese children integrating into Australia society, Astill and Keeves' (1999) findings have significance for international schools with large groups of children attempting to merge into the dominant school culture. The authors examined the impact of a large influx of a single culture and language on the Australian students with 41% of students being of Asian descent;

"The results suggest that there is room for doubt that a particular minority culture can survive in its original form, even if an enclave is set up (either voluntarily or by external design) to protect it. Additionally, the idea that the majority culture can remain unaffected by a large influx of people of foreign cultures, was not supported." (Astill and Keeves 1999: 1)

The interchange and interaction provides cultural enrichment for students as they learn about other cultures and are able to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture

through comparison;

“...teachers in a multicultural setting will encounter a wide range of social values among their students, and will need to be aware that those values are likely to be undergoing change due to cultural and linguistic blending.” (Astill and Keeves 1999: 11)

Identities constructed in the common ground are the result of children attempting to cope with different cultures, and these can have both positive and negative outcomes (Straffon, 2002, Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). The negative is the inability to cope with a fragmentary educational history (Kusuma-Powell, 2004) and the resulting incoherent learning sequences and life experiences which compounds the sense of estrangement and, according to Straffon (2002), causes these children to feel as if they are incapable of having a peer group, as well as believing that this situation is irresolvable. The beneficial aspects of forming international identities includes being able to construct and maintain plural identities to become highly successful when operating in and being between various cultures, both in social and professional situations. There are clear implications for international schools and Straffon (2002) argues the child's experience of identity formation can be influenced, and to some extent managed by the school.

However, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) warn of oversimplifying 'sociopsychological' and 'interactional sociolinguistic' approaches when considering negotiation by assuming members of ethnic groups are “homogenous, uniform and bounded ethno linguistic communities”. This is a valid concern as it is inappropriate to assume there is consistency within groups, or that groups remain constant over time, or for there to be a direct correlation between cultural identity and language use. To do so ignores the multilingual and multicultural realities of numerous unrelated and interrelated and shifting factors and the ethnographer must address such complexities when attempting to theorise the negotiation of identity.

I have used a broad definition of TCKs to include children from immigrant and intermarriage families as well as international school children. Later I shall focus on international school children only.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

TIS is an IBO World School, which means it is accredited to deliver one of the IB

programmes. The next section explains the history and philosophical frameworks behind the IB programmes.

2.2.1 THE HISTORY OF THE IBO

The International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) was founded in Geneva in 1967 to deliver a pre-university course for international students. It provided an alternative to borrowed national systems by offering non-national specific subject content and so the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP) was born. Two further programmes were created in the 1990's; the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Primary Years Programme (PYP). Unlike the externally assessed Diploma Programme, these are frameworks which allow for local interpretation and emphasise transferable skills over content in order to facilitate mobile students when moving from one IBO school to another.

Hill (2002) traced the origins of the IBO back to the foundation of the League of Nations in 1919 and the opening of the International School of Geneva in 1924. This is a significant connection for two reasons; the description of a school attempting to serve the educational needs of numerous nationalities each with different educational histories, philosophies and needs resonates as it is a dilemma which many international schools contend with on a daily basis. The other is the transparent influence of the ideals of the League of Nations, out of which the United Nations would grow following World War II (Hill 2002). From this many of the values of internationalism were distilled into the philosophy and beliefs that characterise international schools today.

2.2.2 THE FEATURES OF THE IBO

The focus on the International Baccalaureate (IB) in this thesis is deliberate as this is the dominant curriculum in English medium international schools and the curriculum used at TIS. The express aim of the IBO is twofold; the first is to facilitate and provide a high standard of education which is recognised by universities worldwide and can be supplied to international families living abroad, something which the IBO is highly successful in, as measured by the rapid increase in schools offering one of the three programmes and its increasing acceptance at universities in many countries. The second is to better the world through developing respect for other cultures and beliefs and to inculcate such ideas in students worldwide. IBO schools have an educational ethos that

actively pursues an international outlook and theoretically allows for transient lifestyles through developing academic proficiency with a focus on transferable skills of self-managed learning.

“All IB programmes actively promote, indeed one might say prescribe, the skills of critical enquiry, and independent and creative learning.” (Drake 2004; 194).

In theory, an IBO school allows the child to return to their home education system and permits mobility between international schools due to this emphasis on skills rather than content. However there is little evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the IB curriculum in allowing students mobility from one school to another where content is determined locally. There is also scant evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the IB’s process-based learning rather than prescribed curriculum content. Much of the existing literature on international schools focuses on macro issues, and explores the worldwide spread and effects of the IB programmes. Yet the notion of an ideologically consistent and shared preK-12 (ages 3 to 18) international curriculum is misleading, as are generalisations which apply to all international schools.

The second aim of the IBO, that of promoting internationalism, is more difficult to measure (Hayden *et al.* 2000, Hayden *et al.* 2003 and Hinrichs 2003). A recently introduced initiative by the IBO is the ‘Learner Profile’ (see Appendix 4) across the three programmes which is intended to personify what it means to be ‘international-minded’. This is in its infancy and so little can be said of its success, but it does demonstrate the IBO’s commitment to fostering internationalism as set out in its Mission Statement (see Fig. 1).

The IBO Mission Statement:

The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Figure 1 IBO Mission Statement (From IBO Website January 2007)

2.3 TYPES OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

As there is not an agreed definition of what an international school is (Hayden *et al.* 2000, Hayden *et al.* 2003, Hayden 2006, MacDonald 2006), discussions of

international schools can be general at best and research into this area needs to address numerous variables. The school's geography, curriculum, ownership, philosophy and all other factors relating to the individual school's situation will determine its nature. It is unrealistic to expect a student attending an international school in Venezuela to have the same academic experience as a student attending an international school in China, Iraq or Poland. Schools implementing the same curriculum whether national or international may do so in very different ways.

Hayden *et al.* (2000) categorise international school curricula into Non-national, Pan-national, Ex-national, Multi-national and Trans-national models; but as the authors point out, there are far too many types in operation for simple broad church categorisations. A revised taxonomy proposed by Hayden *et al.* (2003) was more effective in characterising international school curricula; depending on the school's situation and aims, they may choose to offer a national curriculum (exportation), use an existing curriculum from elsewhere (adoption), mix existing curricula (integration), or invent something completely new (creation).

What makes the task of creating taxonomies problematic is the varied nature of international schools worldwide. Therefore, in follow up to the definition provided in Chapter 1, this thesis focuses on international schools recognised by accreditation agencies and/or the IBO. It is accepted that this narrows down the range of schools to be discussed and schools not falling into these categories can be just as validly called international schools for different reasons; however, given the numerous types of schools and vastly different settings, it is impossible to generalise to all types and so they are not considered in this discussion.

2.3.1 HIGHLY MOBILE STUDENTS

In establishing the myriad types of international schools, the variables are further compounded by a consideration of the student body and their various histories, experiences and perceptions of international schools. At the commencement of the interviews (May 2006), TIS had 24 nationalities amongst 355 students enrolled. Various factors need to be considered, such as the time students stay in one school, how mobile they have been previously i.e. a child who has spent several years in a single home school and recently become international compared to a child who may have lived in a different country every year. The period of time a student spends internationally, their previous

curriculum experiences; and students and families’ previous (international) schools experience will make each student’s life history unique. I have attempted to represent the various situations in Fig 2.

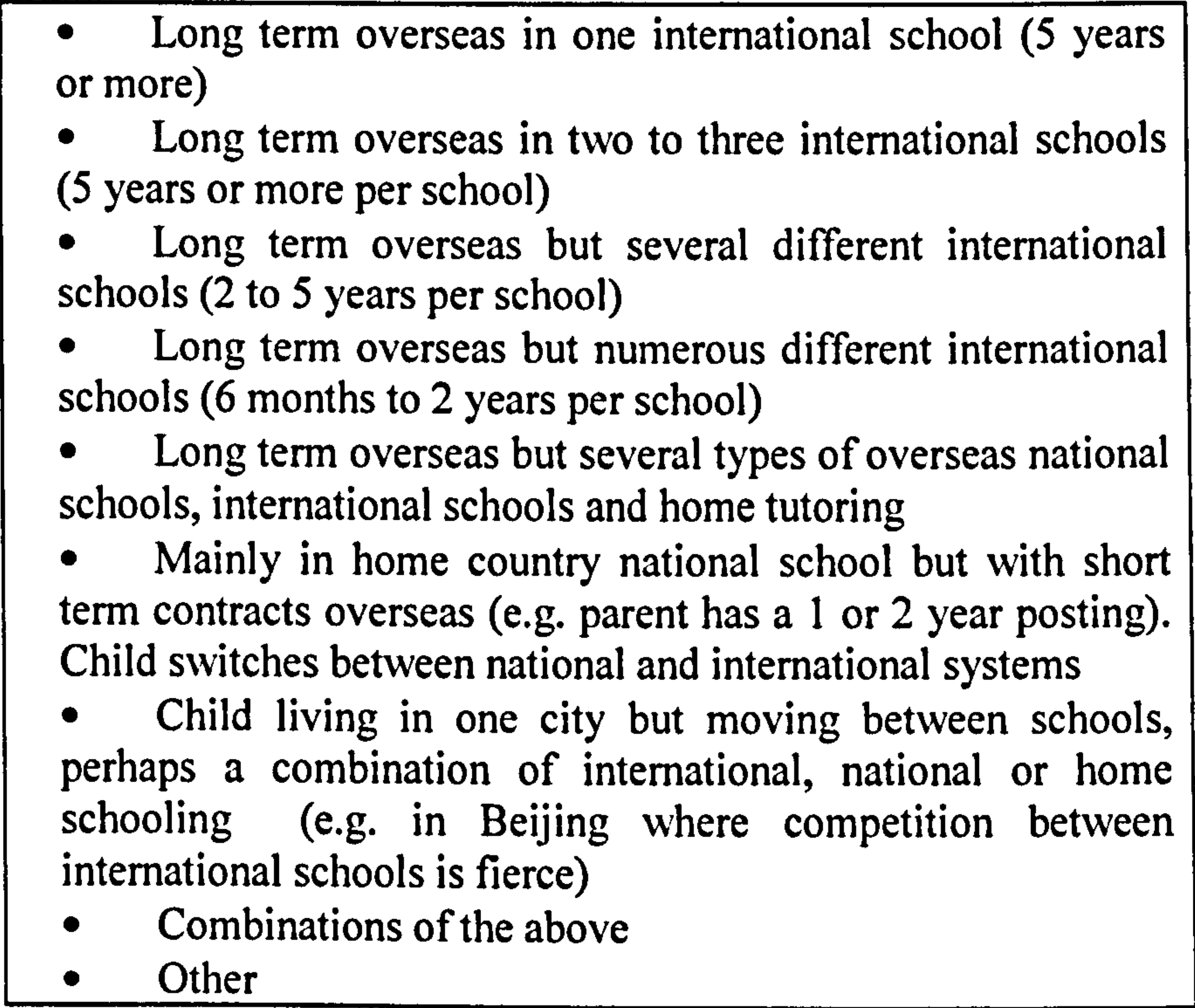


Figure 2 Types of international school student in terms of time spent overseas

The teaching staff are equally transient and mobile (Fail *et al.* 2004) with most international school contracts being two years. Farber and Sutherland’s (2006) survey of staff turnover at 25 international schools in Europe, Asia, Middle East and Africa found staff stayed on average 4.01 years. The selection process was not recounted, so it is not known if the schools referred to fit into the same category as TIS. Still, this provides a useful snapshot and a benchmark for TIS, where the average length of stay for overseas hire is 2.58 years and for students 2.1 years (May 2006).

The nationalities and previous educational histories of the teachers will also influence the school experience a child has. This mixture of cultures, life histories and various overseas experiences again shows that making generalisations about international schools is very difficult. It also reinforces the selection of the ethnographic approach as being the most appropriate for exploring such complicated life histories, albeit in relatively small numbers of participants.

2.3.2 REASONS FOR SELECTING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

International schools provide for the academic needs of globally mobile students

such as the children of multinational corporations or of embassy staff, and for host country children wishing to align themselves with internationalism or seeking an education to access a global professional life;

“We may interpret international education as a service or product consumed by two client groups comprising the globally mobile workforce employed by multinational companies, governmental, non-governmental and parastatal organisations, and the members of the local economic and social elites in countries around the world with aspirations to social and global mobility. What unites these client groups is a disinclination to use the indigenous educational system of a country, either because of language, religious or cultural reasons, or because they calculate that international education will assist their children in a positional competition with the local education system.” (Cambridge 2002b: 3-4)

In two sentences, Cambridge (2002b) has effectively summed up the nature of the demand for international schools, their possible clientele from overseas and host country, and the parents’ reasons for selecting an international school. Perhaps what isn’t emphasised is that sometimes parents do not have a choice; yes they decide to work overseas but once in a foreign country they may not have the option of using the local education system. For these parents it is not so much a ‘disinclination’ but a perceived practical impossibility; for example in China, a short-term overseas student without Mandarin would not easily be able to enter the local Chinese school, not just for language reasons but for content and teaching styles too.

Cambridge (2002b) highlights ‘language’ as a factor and MacKenzie *et al.* (2003) also found English to be the single most important feature in their study of reasons why parents select a particular international school when there is a choice of international schools available. The participants in MacKenzie *et al.*’s (2003) study of three separate groups of parents in Switzerland demonstrates the importance of English language for parents’ selection of a school, though it was not clear in their write-up about the ratio of native or fluent English speakers to non-English speakers amongst their sample. Despite the emphasis international schools place on developing internationalism, the authors report that English language repeatedly emerged as the most important factor for parents selecting a school (MacKenzie *et al.* 2003). In a separate study into private schools in Buenos Aires, Potter and Hayden (2004) also identify English provision as the key determining factor in parental selection. If this is true, while the IBO and schools may wish to focus on ideological issues, parents are more concerned about practical issues. The attraction of international schools for non-English speakers is so their children can

learn English, the language of globalisation and so enrich, what Bourdieu (1990) has coined, their cultural capital by allowing them access to the language of international trade (Potter and Hayden 2004).

2.4 HOW 'INTERNATIONAL' ARE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS?

Other than the pragmatic reasons for a transferable curriculum and an education overseas, the ideological basis for the creation of the IBO was to develop and promote internationalism (Cambridge and Thompson 2004) which is the ability and desire to have a mutual respect and understanding of other cultures, countries and ways of life. Many international schools subscribe to the definitions of internationalism used by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the IBO. The CIS International Student Award is given to students for "their contribution to the development and advancement of internationalism", which is for those who have "demonstrated a clear commitment to sustained interaction with students of other nationalities, languages or ethnic backgrounds in a spirit of international understanding and cooperation", and "demonstrated a commitment to using languages other than their own mother tongue." (CIS website January 2006). The IBO actively promotes internationalism in the desire "to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" (IBO Mission Statement 2007). Understanding internationalism is the key to understanding the targets for linguistic and cultural assimilation in international schools; as a conscious decision to be 'international' with cross cultural awareness and command over two or more languages.

Lewis (2001), Cambridge (2002a) and Hayden *et al.* (2003) identify two separate driving forces behind international schools; the pragmatic and the ideological. The pragmatic reasons for having an international school are straightforward; expatriate families need education provision and local schools may not be able to cater for them due to language or cultural or lifestyle reasons, but alternatively, an international school education can provide students with the skills and experience for a successful international career. However, if the school does not function within the definition of internationalism, in supporting "sustained interaction" between students from various countries and if a school is not actively valuing languages and cultures, then it suggests a contradiction in the way the international school views itself or wishes to be viewed and in the messages they are sending out to their children and community.

A schools’ purpose and philosophy can be expressed in their mission statement, through which the school community ought to decide on, clarify and publicly state the reasons for its existence and its educational purpose. A review of sample international schools’ mission statements (Fig. 3) demonstrates the emphasis placed on internationalist ideals of understanding between cultures and creating responsible world citizens, thus drawing on the ideals of the United Nations which heavily influenced the formation of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (Hill 2002).

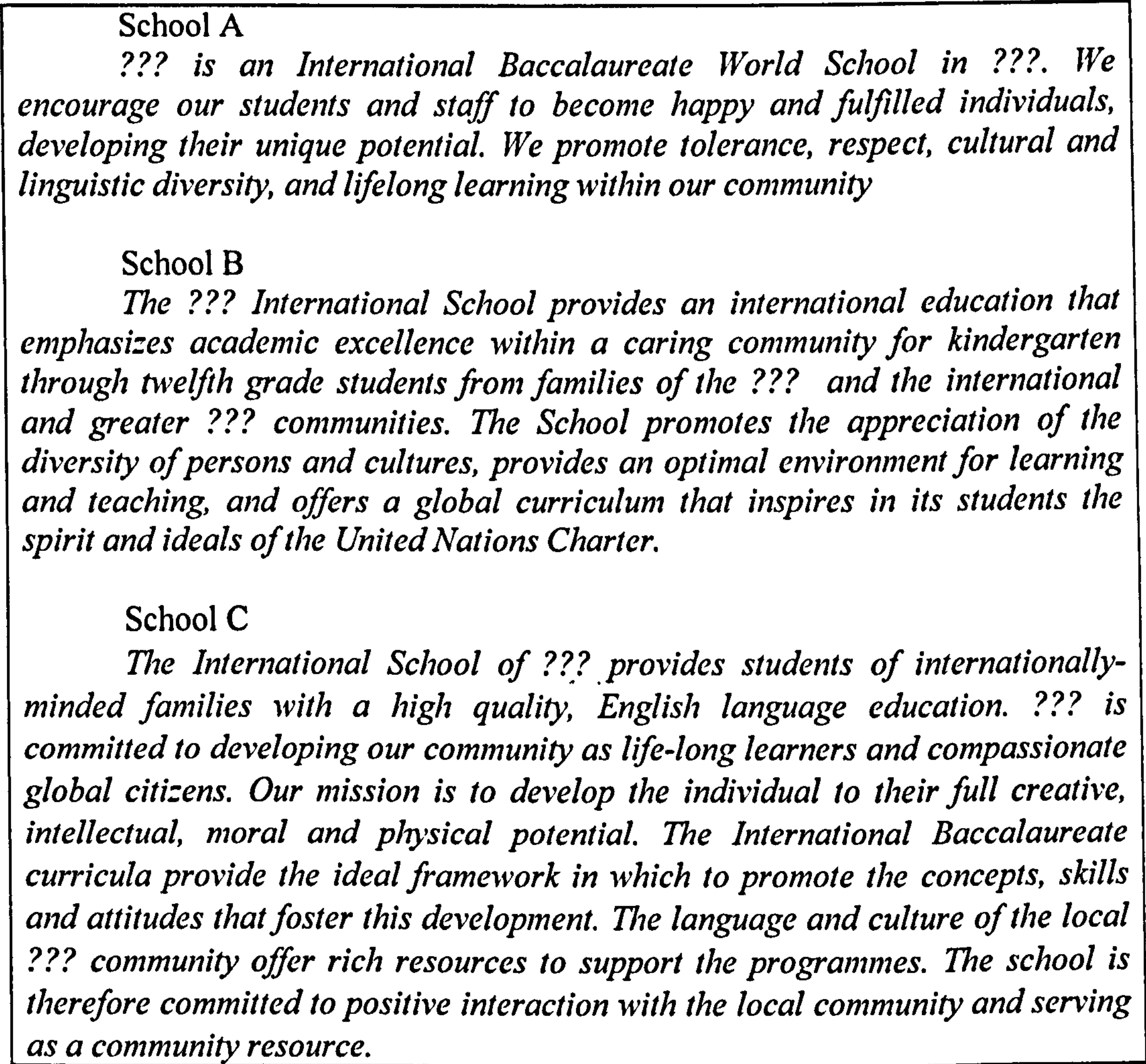


Figure 3 Sample mission statements from three international schools’ websites

The randomly selected examples from three continents demonstrate analogous idealistic aims. The schools were the first results listed in three Vivisimo grouped web searches using the words ‘international’, ‘school’ and continent i.e. Asia, Europe and America. The three schools emphasise cultural respect and the importance of community; schools A and C directly reference the International Baccalaureate and developing potential within students. Schools B and C highlight international mindedness, with

school B referring specifically to the United Nations. School B mentions academic excellence, yet given that English language is a major factor in international school parents' selection criteria (MacKenzie *et al.* 2003, Potter and Hayden 2004), only School C refers to this.

Cambridge (2002b) identifies such mission statements as paradoxical when he contrasts the internationalist aims of international schools, as evidenced by their mission statements, with globalist realities in which they are created and exist. While the mission statement, whether written by the school's owners, Board, director or as a collaborative process involving staff, students and parents, sets out the school's philosophical goals, the fact that it is publicly prominent, for schools operating within a fiercely competitive market suggests as much to do with marketing than genuine philosophical aims (these comments refer to the use of mission statements in promotional literature, and should in no way be considered as criticisms of the three mission statements used here or of the schools they come from). Locating the proof that the mission statement is genuine i.e. that the aims are being realised, is problematic as it is difficult to measure concepts such as happiness or international-mindedness.

Cambridge (2002a) and Hayden *et al.* (2003) suggest international schools may not necessarily offer an international education in the context of developing a sense of 'internationalism' e.g. a British international school that does not focus on content outside of the English curriculum is promoting a national education in a different context. This would appear to be supported by the claims that many international schools are largely mono-cultural, dominated by Anglo-American culture (Allan 2002, Drake 2004, Poore 2005). In contrast, a national school could be offering an international education by promoting an international ideology. Therefore, internationalism requires more than living overseas.

Developing internationalism is a noble pursuit; it is the ethical will and desire to improve the world for the benefit of all, to stop wars, to address social injustice and environmental issues, to protect and empower cultures to help them survive in a globalised world, to act as a check against the unbridled spread of materialism and to inculcate the respect of minority cultures in members of the dominant ones. But, to what extent can international schools claim to be genuinely '*international*'? Hayden *et al.* (2000) addressed perceptions of internationalism in a survey of 1200 students and 200 teachers' from various international schools. Their questionnaire used the categories of

‘international-mindedness’, ‘open-mindedness’, ‘second language competence’, ‘flexibility of thinking’, ‘tolerance’ and ‘respect for others.’ (Hayden *et al.* 2000). The authors reported that the majority of students and teachers agreed on a definition which emphasised multi or bilingual competence, open-mindedness and cultural inclusivity. Interestingly, they also agreed that having parents of different nationalities was not a factor, which implies that internationalism is as much a lifestyle choice as a predetermined condition.

In a separate study, Hayden *et al.* (2003) surveyed the perceived levels of internationalism amongst 3020 international students attending various types of schools with different curricula. The authors compared different curricula, using them as benchmark indicators to measure participants’ levels of internationalism according to how much they agreed with various statements indicating aspects of international mindedness. They reported the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) students had more awareness of internationalism and linked this to the design features of the course, i.e. internationalism is overtly addressed within the curriculum with Theory of Knowledge (TOK) classes, World Literature coursework, and Community, Action and Service (CAS) requirements.

Straffon’s (2002) study of intercultural attitudes calculates levels of internationalism as a result of an international school experience. He asked participants to provide details of not only their current age, time at the present international school, but combined times at previous international schools. This was then factored into his SPSS data to find correlations between intercultural sensitivity (which he defines as the ways people respond to or perceive other cultures and the views of other peoples) and time spent at international schools. Straffon explored the hypothesis that the longer the participants spent in international schools, the higher their intercultural sensitivity ratings, a premise which, he reports, was supported by the statistics and follow up interviews as his data suggested a significant relationship and that such attitudes can change over time.

Studies measuring internationalism are problematic because of one key feature of international schools; while the authors acknowledge the rapid turnover and movement of students and teachers, it is essential to show if respondents are long term members of the international school community or if they have arrived shortly before the survey. To provide an accurate picture of the context of the research, studies of attitudes of international school children should take into account which type of school the

participants are currently at and the different schools they have previously attended, as many international students have attended several (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). Other factors such as the location of previous schools, lengths of time in different countries, experiences of different educational systems and the cultures of their various schools will also impact on attitudes. It is difficult to interweave the complexities of the various life histories in a single school into one study and large scale surveys may be unable to effectively identify so many variables and so assume international school students are a homogenous group.

Despite the IBO's ambition to promote internationalism, as stated in their mission statement and their promotional literature, determining the extent to which it is the multicultural environment of an international school that naturally creates internationalism rather than the IBO curriculum is problematic. Hinrichs (2003) attempted to measure international understanding through a questionnaire and students' written definitions of internationalism. By using schools with equivalent demographics (size, similar ratio of native English speakers, same locale, similar poverty levels as indicated by free lunches, and percentages of students having previously lived overseas), she endeavoured to reduce the variables down to IBDP or Advanced Placement (AP). She also avoided the problem of a transient school population by not using international schools; instead in order to compare the programmes she selected two schools in Washington, USA, one teaching the IBDP and one offering AP. Other than curriculum, the main difference between the schools, according to her pre-test analysis, was that the IBDP students were more likely to have travelled abroad for holidays. She reported only minor differences between the schools with the IBDP students more able to define 'at length' internationalism. This is hardly surprising as the IBDP course is only the final two years of school. Had the students attended a full IBO programme from age 3-18, a more significant result may have been found. Hinrichs (2003) does not conclude the IBDP promotes international awareness; instead she accounts for the non-IBDP school having similar levels of awareness because of increased globalisation impacting on all students.

These various studies suggest that while internationalism is addressed within the schools' stated ideals and curriculum, there is an unspecified level of international awareness, but little to demonstrate the effectiveness of inculcating internationalism. The increased membership of IBO and CIS suggests an increasing number of international

schools have moved from delivering an education equivalent to what could be expected in their home country and towards the development of a knowledge, appreciation and desire for international understanding, that is, if they were not previously doing so before joining IBO or CIS. The international schools networks have grown and so too has the notion of actively promoting internationalism as defined by the IBO. Hayden *et al.* (2003) argue international schools ought to strike a balance between preparation for university and career with the ideological aim of bettering the world through increasing international understanding.

2.4.1 GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

However it is not internationalism which is causing the rapid increase in the numbers of international schools and their numbers of students; it is economic globalisation.

“Our [International] schools are benefactors of, and dependent upon, a global economy.” (Poore 2005: 352).

Due to increasing cultural convergence, there is a need to create educational programmes to prepare students for living in a globalised world (Clarke 2004). Globalisation is the process by which a ‘one world’ is created as determined by market forces and allowed, facilitated and encouraged by increased physical and electronic communications (Clarke 2004, Davies 2006). It is fuelled by money and this determines the nature, philosophy and characteristics of its processes, with all aspects of life being reduced to their financial worth. International schools exist because of, and in, a globalised setting, and the rapid increase in international schools is due to globalisation and world trade, not the desire to set up institutions to promote internationalism.

The changing character of the identity of countries and the way they interact internationally through trade has had, and continues to have, major implications for education, not just for international students, but national and minority students too. The shift in power from 19th century European “nation-states” to present supranational organisations which transcend countries and potentially reduce nation-states to sovereignties within a globalised marketplace has led to the paradox of countries competing in a global economic arena while simultaneously struggling to maintain their national identities (Churchill, 1996). Davies (2006) highlights other paradoxes in that international agreements provide protection and common justice, social rights and

entitlements while the freedom of markets has created a type of globalisation in which only economic rights are truly recognised. Another paradox is for educationalists when considering globalisation as they attempt to meet the needs of students preparing for a globalised world of trans-national markets while simultaneously nation-states may demand rigid controls and accountability (Bottery 2006). That is, the demands for performativity make it possible for a government to rule in an '*advanced liberal*' way (Ball 2003) as the parameters and measurement tools are in place; schools and teachers are driven by the need to perform well in league tables and inspection reports; the determinants are provided by the government and national schools not complying with state inspection or, where it exists, not delivering the state's national curriculum face censure. Cultural globalisation can be evidenced in the availability of food, clothes, music, religions, literature and entertainment from different countries, while a final paradox is that as people from different parts of the world become increasingly aware of other societies, it is ironically causing global cultural homogenisation rather than spreading diversity (Cambridge 2002b).

As countries have changed to accept increasingly borderless world trade (Clarke 2004), the nature of education inside nation-states has developed to greatly encourage one view of education as being primarily, if not solely, a resource;

“...current government policy, whether knowingly or not, is essentially describing improvement from a different perspective—an *internal* perspective of ‘intellectual capital’.” (Kelly 2004: 609, his emphasis).

Whereas previously markets were focused on material goods, increasingly knowledge and expertise are now also commodities, a result of the drive for “universal literacy through mass public education controlled by the nation-state”, (Churchill 1996) which has provided the framework for the redesigning, reappraising and reallocation of knowledge (Bottery 2006). While this in itself is not a new phenomenon, as able, qualified and knowledgeable people have always been in demand, there is a difference in that there is a direct and blatant viewing of knowledge, skills and even cultures (Bourdieu 1990) as commodities to be developed, encouraged and ultimately traded as capital. Viewing people as human capital is very helpful when determining state education as it simplifies the conceptual and philosophical approaches of policy writing; the youth of today are both the work force and market of tomorrow, and this reinforces the basic tenet that to safeguard the future of their country, the government needs to manipulate

education to develop strong economic potential within its people in a form that can be measured and demonstrated in fiscal terms.

“Education worldwide is increasingly concerned with performance and the performativity of teachers, students, and managers.” (Gleeson and Husbands 2003: 500).

A common feature of many current neo-liberal democratic nation-states that dominate the global market is that despite ongoing debate between the political parties about the varying purposes and philosophies of education, the focus remains on the perceived economic value of education and so the need to demonstrate success through value for money as measured by performance indicators shape government policy.

“The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’, or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement.” (Ball 2003: 216)

For example in England, national schools exist in an atmosphere of accountability in which the publishing of inspection reports, league tables and exam results are seen by many to be the main cause for school improvement (as measured by league tables, exam results and inspectors’ reports). The emphasis such indicators place on performativity conveys specific political and philosophical aims e.g. education to promote and preserve the identity, wealth and might of the nation state (Churchill 1996).

By contrast, international schools have indicators determined by their unique settings and situations but are frequently largely free of external quality checks. Often there is little information available to prospective parents or new teachers about the quality of the schools other than the information put out by the school and its local reputation. Accreditation visits (the agencies steer clear of the word ‘inspection’) are optional, but do provide indications that certain standards have been reached; likewise acceptance to deliver the IB programmes only follows approval by the IBO after a school visit and regular follow up visits. Exam results may be scrutinised but with highly transient populations they do not give accurate indicators of the child’s time at school (were they at the school for one year or ten?). Instead the main determinant is the global force of the free market. These schools mainly exist because they are catering for the huge increase of expatriate workers and compete to supply the best academic environment as perceived by parents. The measure of a good international school, as

judged by a free market mentality, is a full one.

The various actualisations of globalisation into all aspects of contemporary life suggests that wealth, ideas, beliefs, cultures and diseases can not be contained by traditional national boundaries due to modern communications. The rapid and unrestricted movement of finances and the arrangements between nation-states to allow freedom of trade has accelerated economic globalisation to the extent that trans-national corporations can influence national politics through the ability to move capital between nation-states (Churchill 1996, Bottery 2006). A simplistic way of viewing this is that a corporation will select locations where it can receive the most benefits, therefore nation-states need to cater for the trans-national companies' demands; causing competition between nation-states as they attempt to attract business. Trans-nationals move operations and related economic benefits (e.g. employment) between countries, which weakens nation-state controls and limits their powers. Traditional borders fade as smaller countries can choose to be located in larger economic groups such as the European Union (Bottery 2006) to combat the trading strength of China and America. Globalisation also impacts on political and citizenship agendas, replacing them with economic ones so individuals are unsure where loyalties lie as individuals within nation-states can be aligned to the supra-national organisations or even other nations (Churchill 1996, Bottery 2006).

While internationalism, as characterised by the United Nations' mandate and IBO Mission Statement, is concerned with ethical and moral pursuits, globalisation in education differs in that it is the explicit linking of education to capital. Rivalry between schools is strong even if they are not geographically close as parents can use their mobility to their advantage; in Beijing and Shanghai, competition is fierce with direct competition for families. At TIS, although the only international school in the area, competition is still a factor as parents will not wish to attend or remain for long if education for their children does not meet their expectations. Operating in the international market place, the private school is offering a service. Parents and their employers have buying power and consumer needs, which the school seeks to satisfy with its operations. If the school's philosophies, aims, curriculum or other features are contrary to parents' expectations it creates dissonance which can result in a loss of students, or to be more accurate in this context, customers.

2.4.2 CREATING GLOBAL OR INTERNATIONAL CITIZENS?

In defining the concept of 'global citizen', most users of the term emphasise the responsibilities an individual has (citizen) to their society (the world) and their obligation to protect it. Global citizenship links the idealist aims of internationalism with the pragmatic process of globalisation; citizens have rights and duties (Davies 2006), global citizens have global rights and responsibilities.

Issues in international schools are likely to become increasingly more relevant to all people as world trade increases because international schools operate in the free market environment of increased globalisation worldwide. This is in addition to the spread and effects of the International Baccalaureate curriculum which IBO Director George Walker has claimed will influence 100 million people in the near future (Drake 2004). International schools need to address the difference between attempting to comply with capitalist forces of efficiency, supply and demand while endeavouring to pursue ethical internationalist concerns of pursuing social justice for all, yet by their nature they exclude lower socio-economic brackets so they can not directly fulfil this claim, only by the actions of the middle class students they produce.

Davies (2006) argues that all people are becoming global citizens regardless of views or beliefs due to mass communication influencing home culture, while Tsolidis (2002) contends that educators need to assume global citizenship is a requirement for future success, but also warns the term is likely to become a cliché without genuine attention as to what it pertains to be and how it can be achieved. Davies (2006) makes the same point and also asks if it should be best described as a metaphor, a paradox, a fiction or an oxymoron.

The conundrums these writers describe are evident when considering that international schools seek to promote internationalism, though it is possible that they are in fact promoting the values of market globalisation. Various writers have discussed the dichotomy between the pragmatic and idealistic in international schools (Cambridge 2002a and 2002b, Hayden *et al.* 2003, Cambridge and Thompson 2004, Davies 2006, Hayden 2006, MacDonald 2006), but perhaps, what needs more prominence is the difference between the international schools' taught curriculum such as cognitive knowledge and international mindedness, as established in the schools' mission statements and IB programmes, and the hidden curriculum which covers the values of the school as conveyed through the school's day to day functions i.e. the way staff and

students treat each other, their environment and their hosts (Clarke 2004, Hayden 2006). Whether attending a profit or non-profit school, if parents wish their children to attend international schools for the career advantages it will give (Potter and Hayden 2004) rather than for internationalist purposes, then creating individuals who will be successful in a capitalist globalised settings will have priority over instilling international mindedness. The essence of capitalism is the need to continually grow and develop. To fuel capitalism and economic globalisation, consumerism needs to be inculcated and whether deliberate or not, this is in part being achieved by schools existing and operating in the market place.

“It may be argued that an outcome of globalist international education is global cultural convergence towards the values of the ‘transnational capitalist class’.” (Cambridge and Thompson 2004: 172)

Should international schools be better called global schools? If they are culturally dominated by Anglo-American culture (Allan 2002, Drake 2004, Poore 2005), and the underlying principles of capitalism and materialism, and if they are preparing students to function better in a globalised market place and providing them with the multinational experiences and abilities to move from one country to another to exploit market opportunities, then there is an evident contradiction between these realities and the schools’ commitment to internationalism. Cambridge (2002a) highlights the same contradictions when considering if international schools are globalised entities; he likens the spread of international schools to branded goods and he asks if international schools should be considered a network of “independently franchised distributors of globally branded international education product and services”, and goes on to write,

“The espousal of the values of free-market capitalism associated with the globalising current of international education has led to the transformation of international education into a globally branded product” (Cambridge 2002a: 230).

While the literature on globalisation and internationalism provide two separate and distinctive approaches to understanding the one-world development, this distinction becomes nebulous when reviewing papers about global citizenship. Global citizenship has two strands; firstly, the rights and entitlement for freedom of movement, expression, trade, beliefs, social justice and appreciation of the values of one’s own culture and other cultures; and secondly, the responsibilities and duties to protect such rights and cultures globally. When emphasising the duties and responsibilities of global citizens, this concept

overlaps with internationalism. However, a contrary view sees global citizens as being entitled to exploit the whole world for cheap labour and resources for financial gain providing they comply with democratic process, local and international laws and free market forces of supply and demand.

Global citizenship education can have various embodiments, with Davies (2006) demonstrating four possible permutations depending on implementation and whether prominence is placed on either 'global' or 'education' or 'citizenship', or combinations of the three. Firstly, a curriculum which has the educational aim to create global citizens; secondly, when education about citizenship has an international focus; thirdly, where international awareness is emphasised along with nation-state rights and responsibilities; and finally a curriculum that teaches citizenship and international awareness though not necessarily together or connected.

An inclusive curriculum in a global context ought to recognise the participants' multicultural experiences. As students are being prepared for an unknown multicultural situation, determined by numerous politically, environmentally, economically and technologically influenced factors in a constant state of flux, teachers do not have a knowledge of the culture they are preparing students for; only an understanding that it will be fluid, unique and unlike their current culture (Tsolidis 2002). Preparing students for such unknown situations is a challenge for educators, but Tsolidis (2002) makes some suggestions; global citizenship stresses rights so students should have daily experiences of two areas, their own rights and participation in a decision making process. Davies (2006) sees critical thinking about one's own beliefs and explicit teaching of social justice, rights, responsibilities, values and ethics as the preferred approach. As the nature of global life requires flexibility and acceptance of change, Tsolidis (2002) advises that to teach global citizenship requires teaching in a manner that models the expected life experiences; the curriculum should therefore be fluid and subject to change, echoing the post-modernist types of individually determined curriculum which writers such as Doll (1993) have proposed, such as assessment-free, self-directed learning models.

In a strongly politically charged paper drawing upon issues raised by OXFAM, Davies (2006) argues that empathy is not enough for global citizenship; people should feel outraged at social injustices so they can be motivated to action. Yet there is not a simple divide between the idealistic tenets of internationalism and the pragmatic realities of globalisation. As stated earlier, with a few notable exceptions, international schools

exist because of world trade, but can still promote internationalism as part of their curriculum content. International schools are in a unique position as they can make a difference to the globalised world through the networking of schools to share an understanding of internationalism. If increasing numbers of students are having an internationalist content as part of their curriculum, this should have an ongoing impact on future world trade and international relationships.

The IBO, international schools and teachers should model internationalism but without full awareness of how they are perceived, they are more likely to be modelling customer-oriented, cost-effective capitalist ventures. In this context even internationalism becomes a product.

2.5 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MINORITIES

International schools have a distinctive position in discussions of multiculturalism and multilingualism because studies based on national schools expect a degree of geographical stability e.g. migrant workers settling in a new country or the struggle for indigenous language survival, assumes the students will spend some years in one place or education system. In contrast, international school students such as those at TIS are frequently arriving and leaving throughout the academic year as determined by their parents' employment needs, creating a highly transient environment, which greatly complicates issues.

One of the distinguishing features of international schools is they are places where numerous languages and cultures co-exist and to some extent interact. This can provide enriching experiences for all involved and the positive benefits are often flagged by the schools and the IBO. However, as with all schools, there are major challenges for educationalists supporting all students in reaching their potential and the same multilingual and multicultural environment which can provide some students with enriching social and academic experiences can also be highly problematic for others.

In an international school, everyone is a minority (Fail *et al.* 2004), but international school minority groups “generally do not suffer the negative impacts associated with students from minority ethnic communities in local school systems”, (Kusuma-Powell 2004), for one main reason; families tend to be educated, middle-class professionals rather than immigrant groups who are commonly characterised as being impoverished. Most research on minority languages is based on either immigrants or

indigenous languages and the socio-political issues of wealth and cultural pressures affecting the L1 and L2 relationship. The traditional view of minority groups (based on research by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation / Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in 1983 - see Churchill 1996) is that they are residents in a country or jurisdiction, which has a numerically and culturally dominant group, language and culture (e.g. religion). Developing this, Churchill (1996) identifies four very different types of national minorities which reflect the globalised world; “romantic/modern nation-state minorities” e.g. Gypsies; “post-modern national minorities” e.g. new age travellers or various groups with ‘alternative’ lifestyles and not having full recognition or acceptance in the nation-state; “transitional/disenfranchised national minorities” are those who have become minorities due to border changes such as various Eastern European countries since the collapse of the Soviet Union; and finally “refugees, diasporas and trans-national minorities”. The expatriate community does not fit into any of these four categories because they are a powerful minority with freedoms provided by their economic strengths. Yet they experience similar difficulties to the other four groups, the most pertinent to this discussion being that the children of minority groups tend to have educational problems due to the difficulties of change and of integrating. The education of the traditional nation-state will “impart a common accepted culture,” (Churchill 1996) which may be very different to the child’s home culture and so the child’s experience of school will differ from the children of the dominant group. This is well documented in studies of minorities and Canen (2003) reinforces this in her paper on education in Brazil, as she writes, “...the predominance of a monocultural, cognitive-based approach to child education and literacy learning, [...] should be detrimental to children whose cultural and linguistic patterns are discontinuous with the school ones.” In the international school context the ‘common accepted culture’ is Anglo-American and children not able to align with this, face difficulties. This shall be explored further in the discussion of cultural dissonance in section 2.6.1 and in Chapter 6.

2.5.1 ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES FOR TRANSIENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

It is probable that all students will have their home language(s) and culture(s) impacted due to their international school experience. Although a key reason for selecting an international school (where choice is available) is for English language development (MacKenzie *et al.* 2003), it has been questioned if first language English speakers will be

appropriately linguistically or academically challenged if the classroom has dominant numbers of non-native speakers and frequently has new non-English speaking students arriving (a concern raised at TIS by the parents of a small number of L1 English speakers). In addition, non-native English speakers may find the international school experience detrimental to their first language ability. Tannenbaum (2003) addresses the loss of minority languages in a national setting and argues that for minority languages to survive it is essential that they are used in all contexts on a daily basis. In the same way all aspects of an individual's language repertoire needs to be used if it is to develop. Non-native English speakers receiving an education in English potentially limit the development of their first language unless a genuine effort is made to ensure they have academic access to the language; a reasonable goal in an immersion bilingual programme (Baker 2001) but logistically very unlikely when dealing with numerous languages e.g. TIS has 24 nationalities, of which 19 are from non-English speaking countries; for full immersion 19 language programmes would be needed as well as English.

Murphy (2003) and Kusuma-Powell (2004) explore another difficulty for bilingual and multilingual children and consider those who have not established academic competence in any single language, a situation created by, and compounded by, their families' mobility. 'Functionally Multi-Lingual' children (Kusuma-Powell 2004) are a common feature of international schools with a high turnover of students; these are highly mobile multilingual students who, regardless of having attended international schools for several years, have not developed any of their languages to a high enough academic standard for exam or university success, and so are unable to fully benefit academically from the international school experience. Functional ability in language is being able to effectively and competently communicate, that is being able to use the language as a tool for communication but without necessarily having grammatical accuracy or spoken fluency (Baker 1993, 2001). Murphy (2003) and Kusuma-Powell (2004) also highlight the danger of 'subtractive bilingualism', that is the learning of a second majority language having a negative impact on someone's first language (Cummins 1992, 2001, Baker 1993, 2001). The authors describe the difficulties of children learning a second (academic) language before they have fully established their first or mother language and warn that teachers often assume the students have a stronger academic language other than English in which they could demonstrate a greater ability to intellectualise, when in fact for many their most developed language is English.

Kusuma-Powell's (2004) premise is that these children's language difficulties are largely going undetected and unnoticed, not only as they switch into and out of different languages where the teachers can not follow, but also as they move between schools, to the extent that she suggests a level of collusion between parents and students in order to disguise difficulties. This is an unlikely reason for mobility, unless they are changing schools in the same city, although it is a valid point that the transient nature of highly mobile expatriates can conceal children's real abilities as they are frequently starting at new international schools. Interestingly, in describing a national system, Canen (2003) identifies a very similar problem;

“...the fact that children coming from cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds discontinuous with the hegemonic school environment spend many years in school and fail to acquire basic literacy skills should raise serious concerns.” (Canen 2003: 253).

Canen's findings imply that high mobility is only one factor and although the children of her study have more geographical stability than most international school students, the causes for concerns are similar, such as the situation at TIS where a large percentage of the school population is at odds with the school's Anglo-American dominated culture. This suggests that the international school 'network' is failing highly mobile children as they pass from school to school without providing continuity. TIS has little interest in the records or reports from previous schools because students come from so many different systems, instead testing students on entry. Unfortunately, even between international schools there is little trust placed on reports as some students may be arriving from institutes which have quite different cultural purposes for school transcripts, different grading systems (e.g. the perception of grade 'A' is different in England, India and America). This does not mean reports are routinely discounted, rather that they are only one indicator of a student's ability and are not relied on.

One suggestion for functional multilingual children is that there may be a special educational need (SEN) which is overlooked as they switch from language to language. Attempts have been made to identify dyslexia in multilingual children through non-verbal testing (which requires great skill and specific training) and more recently by phonological testing (Guron and Lundberg 2003). Due to their transient lifestyles, international school students with any form of additional learning requirements (SEN or gifted) will be more likely to be neglected for periods of time because their educational idiosyncrasies may not be effectively identified upon arrival at a new school. If a child

moves every one or two years, a substantial part of their school experience will consist of teachers attempting to find out ‘what is wrong’. Transient students and families will always be starting again and a student with a SEN may be unwilling to draw attention to him or herself. Added to this is the social upheaval, the breaking of old friendships, the need to make new ones and for the older students the pressure of being a teenager (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). The implication is that schools with effective means of evaluating students on arrival will be much more able to help.

2.6 HOME LANGUAGE AND CULTURE MAINTENANCE

Home language support is the means by which long-term overseas international students develop an understanding of their home country, culture and mores. Both students and tutors are owners or ‘bearers’ of their culture (Byram 1998) and language is an essential part of this cultural identity.

“Language maintenance is relevant not only to the survival of minority languages, but also to the psychological reality of immigrants and their families.” (Tannenbaum 2003: 374).

The maintenance of the first or home language (L1) is important for academic success in L2. Nguyen, Shin and Krashen (2001) argued that not only was the development of the first language in no way disadvantageous to L2 acquisition, but could be beneficial to the L2 growth;

“A plausible explanation for this effect is that use of the first language at home encourages more and higher quality parent-child interaction, which has positive consequences for cognitive and affective development. In addition, there is evidence that higher development of literacy in the primary language is causally related to literacy development in the second language.” (Nguyen *et al.* 2001: 160).

The authors are clear that if there is a supported and developed L1 in the home, L2 will benefit in school. The more support a child at home has, in whatever language, the more the student will benefit. It is not essential for parents to be fluent in the language of the school, indeed parents may try to teach their children a second language, but without expertise or knowledge of the language, their efforts may well be counter productive. Nonetheless, it is important to create a conducive and encouraging learning environment in the home.

Byram asserts language cannot be taught in isolation from an understanding and

experience of cultural identity, and for cultural transference languages should ideally be taught by a native speaker as, “People embody the cultures in which they live”, (Byram 1998). This is more than providing information about a country; “Socialisation and acquisition of social identities is not simply a matter of cognitive learning,” but of deliberate interaction with the culture and representatives of the culture (Byram 1998). Indeed, the transference of culture is an essential part of the home language learning process if the overseas child is to be able to repatriate to their home country.

“Language is the means of socialisation into one’s culture, the vehicle for transmitting the cultural heritage of the past, reshaping it, and passing it on to the next generations.” (Pease-Alvarez and Vasquez, 1994, cited in Tannenbaum 2003: 374-375).

The process of learning is an essential characteristic of culture and so deliberate and conscious teaching of it is also crucial. That culture is taught and reproduced is itself an important component of culture (Seelye 1993). There is a disparity between what can be taught and what can be learnt, so that there will always be ‘leakage’ as well as growth. Culture is in a constant state of flux. If an institution’s goal for home language development requires intercultural competence, it is “crucial if not essential,” for the presence of native-speaker teachers as “intercultural competence involves the ability to relate affectively as well as cognitively”, and it is through “culture-specific affective relationships with children [...] that their influence is strongest.” (Byram 1998). This demands an explicit curriculum and for international school teachers to have a professional understanding of culture and attitudes of openness, acceptance, and knowledge of the “other culture”. In addition, the “use of two or more languages [...] should also include comparative analysis [...] of the ways in which different languages express different cultures”. (Byram 1998).

Learning about cultures is more than studying a country’s history and geography; it requires an interest in cultures including one’s own, respect for others and to regard cultures as living and subject to change (Davies 2006) and as all living beings, they can thrive or become threatened and extinct. There are many definitions of ‘culture’ and there is much debate as to how to define it, about which the philosopher and educationalist Alfred North Whitehead (1929) sardonically wrote, “It is a well-founded historical generalisation that the last thing to be discovered in any science is what the science is really about.” Byram (2003) uses a more specific definition of culture in his discussion of

the relationship between being bicultural and intercultural;

“In this context, the definition of ‘culture’ I shall use is the ‘shared beliefs values and behaviours’ of a social group, where ‘social group’ can refer to any collectivity of people from those in a social institution such as a university, a golf club, a family, to those organised in large-scale groups such as a nation or even a ‘civilisation’ such as ‘European’.” (Byram 2003: 50)

In discussing the difficulty of finding a definition for his book Teaching Culture, Seelye (1993) cites anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954) who listed 300 possible meanings of the term ‘culture’. Seelye recounts his own struggles to provide an accepted definition and ultimately decides; “The most widely accepted usage now regards culture as a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life” and he goes on to write, “What is culture? It is everything humans have learnt.”

2.6.1 CULTURAL DISSONANCE

Finally, issues of cultural dissonance are considered with two potential areas for conflict discussed here. The first is between various students, as groups determine dominance, acceptance, identity and peer norms both between ethnic sets and within them. The second area is located within the culture of the school (i.e. the staff, curriculum and philosophy) and conflict with other groups that do not share the same cultural heritage.

Drake (2004) explores the difficulties of non Anglo-American centric communities accessing the IB programmes and examines the extent to which the IB is genuinely international and how much it is Anglo-American dominated. While the IBO extols the virtues of internationalism, there is little evidence to identify how it is actually realised in international schools (Allan 2002). Most international schools, despite the large mix of nationalities and the attempts to be multicultural, are in fact largely mono-cultural and this creates dissonance not just between the different cultures, but also amongst the students and their families, and between the school’s stated aims and its actual outcomes (Allan 2002 and 2003, Drake 2004, Poore 2005). With different cultures mixing and two-way assimilation there is always the potential for cultural conflict. For example, a Korean student encouraged to be vocal and speak their mind will experience great difficulties if returning to a Korean school, or;

“...a Chinese or Japanese child successfully adapted to the skill of independent inquiry would find it difficult to distinguish appropriate critical analysis at school from an inappropriate lack of respect at home, producing an inevitable cultural

dissonance.” (Drake 2004: 195).

Allan (2002) argues there is little evidence of evaluation of intercultural learning for the majority of international school students. Although pedagogical expectations are culturally determined, little is known about the extent to which students not sharing the experience of the IBPYP and MYP focus on inquiry-based learning and iconoclastic approaches will be disadvantaged, yet, this can cause cultural clashes and dissonance as students with different learning experiences struggle to access the IB curriculum (Dimmock and Walker 2000, Allan 2002 and 2003, Drake 2004, Poore 2005). To emphasise this difficulty, Drake (2004) considers practical issues such as the cultural frictions for students and teachers in pastoral roles using the example that certain cultures make it very difficult for a student to discuss issues with a teacher of the opposite sex.

Drake (2004) argues the Western mentality behind the IBO has led to teachers and schools believing only one methodology of ‘Western liberalism’ (as characterised by the IB Learner Profile) has any worth in teaching. This requires non Anglo-American students to conform, perhaps losing or ignoring the cultural values of their home country in order to gain acceptance or approval of the dominant culture (Allan 2002, Poore 2005). Further cultural dissonance will be caused when students return to their family or home country (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Drake 2004). Without a pluralistic approach to curriculum delivery, it may be that a single dominant culture is being promulgated despite the school’s wish to pursue internationalism (Allan 2003). Allan (2003) argues that cultural conflict and dissonance can be helpful to a school in identifying cultural issues that need to be addressed and perhaps it is here, in what Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) have described as identities formed on the fringes of negotiations where ‘true internationalism’ arises.

Free (second) language choices are the result of social, economical, political, cultural and ideological decisions about the value of a language in relation to its legitimate recognition by majority and minority social forces (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). The language of globalisation is English and the culture is Anglo-American (Cambridge 2002b, Yamato and Bray 2006). This does not mean to learn English one must adopt Anglo-American culture, indeed Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) cite examples where this is not the case e.g. Iranians and Indians who learn English entirely within their home culture. However, international school students sharing the school’s

English language and Western culture on arrival have increased access to curriculum content and academic success as students used to different learning styles need longer to acclimatise if they must first learn English or adjust to didactic approach which emphasises inquiry based group work.

A school may be multicultural *in nature* due to its diverse nationalities and multicultural student body, and it might be multicultural *in theory* due to the school's mission statement and philosophies and seeking to promote internationalism. However, it can be questioned as to what extent international schools are genuinely multicultural *in reality*. It is inevitable that in an institute with many cultures, clashes will occur. These clashes may be minor e.g. eye contact, physical closeness, eating habits, or may be considered more upsetting e.g. toilet protocols, spitting or conflict between racial groups. However Allan (2002 and 2003) and Drake (2004) have identified something with much more sinister undertones; students not from the dominant Anglo-American culture of globalisation are significantly less likely to have full academic access to the school without sacrificing aspects of their cultural identity.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The literature discussed in this chapter is comprehensive and representative of the various forces currently at play in international schools. This review indicates that individuals entering an international school environment will experience change due to identity dislocation and interactions between different cultural groups. The overall trends from the various papers point to cultural blending, change and conflict as a feature of the highly-mobile, multicultural setting (Bell 1997, Astill and Keeses 1999, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). With children from many nationalities in one setting, they will have very different previous educational experiences; therefore to have a more accurate understanding of what is happening in a single context, researchers will need to consider different combinations of previous school and curriculum types, cultures and length of time overseas. These different features provide a theme for this thesis which is the effect of living in a highly-mobile, market-driven, multicultural community.

The ideals of internationalism have been clearly defined by the IBO and CIS and this is the stated aim of most international school as evidenced by their mission statements, yet parent selection is more concerned with language choices (MacKenzie *et*

al. 2003, Potter and Hayden 2004), future positional benefits (Potter and Hayden 2004) and lack of viable options (Cambridge 2002b). The literature reveals a separate apparent contradiction between the IBO's and CIS's drives to promote internationalism and the reported cultural dissonance, negative behaviours and attitudes that exist in international schools (Allan 2002, 2003, Drake 2004, Poore 2005), which clearly negate the stated internationalist aims of the schools; a mismatch which in many schools does not appear to have been recognised or addressed. In addition, the rapid increase in 'for-profit' schools is indicative of current rapid globalisation which provides an underlying philosophy embracing free-market consumerism; the vast majority of international schools exist because of the global economy (Poore 2005) and international schools need to balance internationalism with the realities of their situation in the market place in order to continue operations (MacDonald 2006). Indeed the freedom of international schools to operate outside of local government controls means their main operational check is a financial one; a successful international school is determined by its number of fee-paying students.

In light of the rapid increase in international schools, comparatively little research has been carried out to explore the perspectives of international school students and parents; and in consideration of the likely continued growth of international schools due to increased globalisation and world trade (MacDonald 2006), there will be increasing numbers of people who may be impacted in future years (Drake 2004), therefore it is evident that this is an area where more research is needed. The ethnographic interview approach used in this study (see sections 3.1 and 3.2) allows for a clear link between the literature presented in this chapter and the following empirical study (Chapters 4 - 7) by triangulating with existing literature during the analysis and write-up stages, as well as the practice of re-interviewing and an emphasis on participants as co-researchers (see section 3.2.5), so that the participants can respond to current theories and ideas about international schools. It is through this process of challenging and validating that an original contribution to knowledge in this field can be made.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter has three distinct sections which explain the theoretical underpinnings and rationale for the research methodology. These are an explanation of the ethnographic interview process, a description of the specific research stages of this thesis and background information about TIS.

3.1 THE ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW

The design of this thesis is mostly derived from Spradley's (1979) book The Ethnographic Interview. The population at TIS is highly transient with high student and teacher turnover rates. Most social settings would expect a degree of social stability while at TIS the only constant appears to be high mobility. Indeed the high levels of turnover provided the justification for selecting an ethnographic interview approach as it is the most suitable for a study which attempts to deal with numerous variables in a highly mobile situation.

At its simplest level, ethnography means writing about people and what constitutes their existence i.e. their cultural identity. Spradley (1979) introduces ethnography as "the work of describing a culture" and Pole and Morrison define the science of ethnography as;

"An approach to social research based on the first hand experience of social action within a discrete location, in which the objective is to collect data which will convey the subjective reality of the lived experience of those who inhabit that location." (Pole and Morrison 2003: 16)

Ethnography is both a process and a product, it is a scientific description of people in specific social settings, and it is a qualitative research method and a behavioural science which has gained credence over the last thirty years. It is a human process and the best way to attempt to understand the complexities of life in an international school (Allan 2002, Pole and Morrison 2003). It is becoming "if not the dominant, then certainly one of the most frequently adopted approaches to educational research in recent years." (Pole and Morrison 2003). Ethnographic analysis can provide in-depth understanding of parts of society by exploring at length and in great detail stories taken from a specific setting.

The many strengths of ethnography outweigh concerns about its limitations. The

ethnographic approach can explore diverse angles, track alterations of perspectives over time and document various viewpoints and behaviours, yet, although Hammersley (1992) points out that surveys can also chart differences of perspectives over time, they do not do so with the insightful descriptions that the ethnographer can discover. This is because ethnography as a methodology has the flexibility to research the unanticipated and is able to adjust to changing situations. It exists in a natural environment with the research emphasis on process as well as results (Pole and Morrison 2003).

The 'ethnographic interview' specifically focuses on a technique to locate the researcher in the participants' world, to allow for the respondents to become active players in the research process and to explore in depth by having the participants explain their realities first hand. Repeated interviews allow for in-depth understanding and increased validity as participants can verify the accuracy of previous interviews and the analyses based on them. It is this feature of returning to the same participants time and time again until 'saturation' is reached, i.e. nothing new is being said (Spradley 1979), that distinguishes the ethnographic interview approach from other types of research.

Spradley (1979) provides guidelines for ethnographic interviews, characterising them as speech events similar to a series of friendly conversations; although asymmetrical in form as the participants talk more than the interviewer. He advises the ethnographer to allow the interviewee to direct the conversation while frequently expressing interest and ignorance in order to encourage topic expansion and to ask questions using the respondent's words. The ethnographic interviewer should clearly inform participants of the explicit purpose and direction of the interview and the research e.g. to study a scene from the participants' viewpoint. Also the process, such as why the interviews are being recorded and what shall happen to the data, should be explained.

One characteristic of ethnography is that it takes place in a social setting which is unfamiliar to the researcher who seeks to understand it through the explanations of the participants involved rather than by drawing conclusions based on 'outside' judgments or applying his or her previous knowledge. This distance increases the likely validity of the research as those actively involved in the social scene i.e. the participants, may take for granted their everyday subjective reality and perhaps not consider its significance, while an outsider has the ability to see somebody else's everyday normal reality as being unique and of great interest (Spradley 1979). The researcher aims to describe events, stories and settings as realistically as possible from the perspectives of those involved,

that is, to describe social phenomena from *within* the setting. Therefore, the ethnographic interview approach requires a shared understanding of the data by the participants and the researcher; for example, Spradley (1979) describes having to learn the language of his informants e.g. their terms for the police, sleeping rough, being arrested, prison slang etc. This allowed Spradley access to the participants' worlds so their concepts could be understood as they were expressed. It is through reporting 'as it happens', that the researcher's preconceived ideas will be challenged. An ethnographic account seeks to explore the lives of, and understand, people in their natural setting and reduce the researchers' narrative voice to a minimum, as it is the participants' stories (and not the writer's previous notions) that are of interest when attempting to understand a social scene. This entails an overlap between the roles of researcher and informants with the researcher also becoming a participant within the scene in helping to explore accounts; while simultaneously the participants can act as fellow researchers and help the researcher to understand.

"Ethnographic analysis is the search for the parts of a culture and their relationships as conceptualized by informants. Most of the time this internal structure as it is known to informants remains tacit, outside of their awareness. The ethnographer has to devise ways to discover this tacit knowledge." (Spradley 1979: 93, his emphasis).

To achieve this, participants must be willing and able to provide honest accounts and the researcher should act as a conduit, relaying truthful descriptions and be fully aware of potential reactivity.

"Moreover, this means that not only do we inevitably influence the fields we observe but we may also 'change ourselves' as observation causes us to reconsider, rethink and reflect upon our actions and attitudes as we collect and analyse observational data" (Pole and Morrison 2003: 28-29).

Multiple realities existing within a single setting require the researcher to 'sieve' accounts, and such a process can invalidate the ethnography if great care is not taken to restrict 'researcher reactivity', that is the effect the researcher may have on the scene they are observing and the subsequent data collection (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Hammersley 1991, 1992, Pole and Morrison 2003).

"While the ethnographer may strive to minimise her or his effects on the situation studied, no one can guarantee this; and sometimes the effects can be significant despite the researcher's best efforts" (Hammersley 1992: 164).

Hammersley (1992) further clarifies the potential danger due to the presence of the researcher as ‘procedural reactivity’ which is when participants are fully aware that what they are saying will be scrutinised thus affecting the data results, and ‘personal reactivity’ such as the researchers’ gender, status, occupation, age, class, nationality and relationship with the participant which may also affect what people say (Hammersley 1991). For this thesis, the potential for a coercive power relationship between students and teacher is high and so issues of researcher reactivity were identified and addressed in order to minimise its effects (see section 3.2.2).

An additional attribute of ethnography is the use of ‘grounded theory’; the term coined by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 to describe the developing of research questions from within the data during the data collection and analysis rather than a hypothesis testing method of more traditional research methods. Ethnographic analysis, in trying to explore a setting, should not have predetermined theories. Instead, the researcher should describe the world as he or she finds it and without preconceived ideas, but this provides an additional challenge as he/she will need to be aware of existing research in order to research the domain in question before the interview stage commences. If the literature predetermines the research, the task may become reduced to either proving or disproving the existing theories shaped by the literature. Rather, the ethnographic researcher should be flexible and able to respond to the unfurling social scene they discover; if need be readjusting the methodology for the reality of the encounters and willingly suspending his or her existing knowledge so it does not obscure what is in front of them.

Another feature of ethnography is the simultaneous data collection, analysis and theorising processes. The sequence which Spradley (1979) outlines suggests the following steps; selecting a problem; collecting cultural data; analysing cultural data; formulating ethnographic hypotheses and writing the ethnography. This requires the researcher to locate appropriate informants, conduct interviews, analyse the interviews, discover cultural themes, discover theories (hopefully) and write a thesis. However this should not follow a linear progression, rather it ought to develop organically; Spradley (1979) greatly emphasises the importance of simultaneous data collection and analysis and the feeding back of findings into the data collection.

3.1.1 EVALUATING ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

The legitimacy of ethnography, “as a research process and product comes in part,

[...] from its capacity to persuade its readers that it can provide truthful accounts of social reality” (Pole and Morrison 2003). To do so, an ethnographic researcher needs to address questions of validity. The ethnographer should consider how the completed research will be measured or assessed by others. The two ‘yard sticks’ for traditional qualitative research are the reliability and validity of the methodology and research design;

“Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions.” (Hammersley 1992: 67).

“Validity in this context refers to the accuracy with which a description of particular events (or a set of such descriptions) represents the theoretical category that it is intended to represent and captures the relevant features of these events” (Hammersley 1992: 67).

However, for assessing ethnographic research Hammersley (1991, 1992) proposes a different focus, arguing accounts should be judged according to their “truth (or validity) and relevance”.

Yet Eisner (1992) argues that to reach ‘ontological’ objectivity, that is, a state of ‘veridicality’ in which things are seen as they truly are, is not possible because realities, truths and perceptions change both between parties and over time. The logical link between plausibility, credibility and ontological objectivity is absolute truth, but Eisner, in condensing his complex philosophical argument into a few almost simplistic lines, sums up the impossibility of attaining absolute reality;

“How can we ever know if our views of reality match or correspond to it? To know that we have a correspondence between our views of reality and reality itself, we would need to know two things. We would need to know reality, as well as our views of it. But if we knew reality as it really is, we would not need to have a view of it. Conversely, since we can not have knowledge of reality as it is, we cannot know if our view corresponds to it.” (Eisner 1992: 51)

So how does one deal with such a conundrum? Eisner suggested a pluralistic approach to both generating and accepting knowledge. Eisner and Hammersley argue we should be as truthful as we can and in doing so, attempt to ensure the validity of the ethnographic research at every stage.

Hammersley’s shift away from using reliability as an evaluation criterion reflects the nature of ethnography; events can not be recreated in a laboratory as the same participant asked the same question on different days can provide different and sometimes contradictory answers. Relevance refers to the research impacting on and

improving the current situation; indeed the whole purpose behind research should be to provide original contributions to the existing knowledge base and change policies and practices for the better. The emphasis need not be on assigning instances to categories, but attempting to prove if a participant's account is truthful to them i.e. do they corroborate their own and other participants' stories in following interviews, can they explain the apparently contradictory responses and can they assist the researcher in developing a deeper understanding?

Of most importance to Hammersley is the validity of the accounts. Validity in research has many different aspects, being the degree to which that which is being measured is what was stated or intended and the meaning of the data (Fitz-Gibbon and Morris 1987, Messick 1995). The validity of a research methodology also depends on the context of the research carried out and the purpose of the research in locating knowledge. Validity describes the significance and application of the research. The researcher has a social responsibility to ensure the validity of their work, especially if the research is intended to inform policy or improve teaching practices, because if action is to be taken in the light of flawed research, subsequent actions may be significantly detrimental to those impacted.

Developing his rationale, Hammersley (1992) expands his criteria into plausibility and credibility of accounts. First he asks if a claim sounds plausible in the context of the social scene. If not, he then writes;

“...we must ask whether the claim is credible, by which I mean whether it is of a kind that we could reasonably expect to be accurate, given what we know about the circumstances in which the research was carried out” (Hammersley 1992: 70).

If the answer to these questions is ‘no’, evidence needs to be provided to support the researcher's claims. The validity of any research and research methodology must be demonstrated if the findings are to be accepted and therefore it is necessary that the ethnographer critiques the methodology and findings throughout the entire process. An ethnographic approach can be highly valid and reliable if managed effectively and appropriately (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Pole and Morrison 2003).

Hammersley does not provide an effective answer to the main dilemma he raises when he asks if an account sounds reasonable or credible. The next question needs to be ‘to whom?’, who decides if an account sounds believable or plausible? Can judgment be fairly applied to all accounts by all readers? The answer is ‘no’, and the irony is that the

science which describes events and situations in a subjective manner will also be assessed by others in the same way. Pole and Morrison (2003) offer some practical guideline to match Hammersley’s advice (Fig 4).

- 1 Check with informants, but also adopt a critical attitude to what informants say
 - 2 Seek alternative explanations
 - 3 Check ethnographer effects
 - 4 Represent the range of voices in the field

Figure 4 Guidelines to increase validity in ethnographic research (extracted from Pole and Morrison 2003)

To demonstrate plausibility and credibility, the ethnographer should follow Hammersley’s (1992) own conclusion which is *to be aware* not only of the possibilities of ethnography, but the limitations and to take into account that at every stage the researcher may impact on the findings.

3.1.2 ETHICAL ISSUES

From the outset of this research, ethical issues were considered and the research methodology was shaped to incorporate these concerns. The Durham University ethics guidelines were adhered to throughout. The Director of TIS gave unconditional permission for the research and signed the Ethics Form. Research approval was granted by the Durham University Ethics Committee.

The most important ethical issue is the welfare of the participants. In attempting to discover the essence of the participants’ experiences, it was a realistic possibility that painful areas would need to be explored e.g. anxiety over identity or long-term disadvantages for the children. Researchers need to be aware and sensitive to changing situations, and “to recognise that ethical issues will permeate every stage in the research process.” (Pole and Morrison 2003).

These concerns and the ways I addressed them are discussed in sections 3.2.2 and 7.3

3.1.3 CRITICISMS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Criticisms of ethnographic studies stem from the apparent lack of a rigorous methodological approach and “the tendency to describe and characterise events rather than quantify them” (Pole and Morrison 2003). Further criticisms concern the anecdotal

nature of accounts and the inability to generalise. These are appropriate comments but they do not negate the ethnographic approach, rather they help to characterise it. Accounts are subjective, but they are so intentionally and knowingly. Ethnography is about the telling of stories but through these specific accounts aspects of lives are discovered in a way that surveys and questionnaires perhaps could not elucidate. The reader ought to ask if the researcher is being reasonable and realistic about what ethnography can achieve and has the analysis of the transcripts been thorough and as objective as possible. It is difficult to generalise ethnographic findings, but not impossible; the researcher can report how people in a certain context describe their behaviours and attitudes. The provision of detailed descriptions can allow the reader to consider the transferability of such accounts and decide if generalisations to other similar contexts can be made. Although ethnography may be considered by some to be too specific thus preventing generalisations, the depth of insight which can be accessed in this methodology demonstrates the value of the ethnographic approach (Pole and Morrison 2003).

“the superiority of ethnography is based precisely on the grounds that it is able to get closer to social reality than other methods.” (Hammersley 1992: 44).

Hammersley (1992) responds to the more outlandish declarations of ethnographic research validity in the qualitative versus quantitative debate by advising that the claims of the strengths of ethnographic methodology are to be judged relative to quantitative methods and just as rigorously examined. He goes on to argue that although doubts have been raised about the validity of quantitative approaches and findings, this is not the same as concluding that ethnographic approaches have more valid findings.

The claims of ethnographers having unique understanding of participants' life stories can not be accepted at face value. Hammersley (1992) questions the assumption that “researcher's experience, empathy and involvement be a better basis than that of the practitioners”. There are, however, many advantages to the ethnographic interview approach, as it allows access to social scenes, first hand accounts are provided and should the researcher decide to do so, accounts can be validated by active members of that scene. Yet, it should not be considered to be a perfect research method as there are potential flaws unless the process is effectively managed by the researcher.

Much has been written about the needs for researchers to be ‘objective’ which Eisner describes as being “one of the most cherished ideals of the educational research

community” while at the same time it is an impossible realisation as all research is subjective *to some degree* (Philips 1989, Eisner 1992, Hammersley 1992).

“To what degree can ethnographic accounts legitimately claim to represent an independent social reality?” Hammersley (1992: 2).

“...Ethnography as a product is a reflection of the ethnographer in terms of his or her biography, the intellectual tradition(s) that have influenced his or her approach to research and to the decisions he or she makes about the research process as it progresses.” (Pole and Morrison 2003: 129)

Hammersley (1991) warns of generalisations such as assumptions that the participants are true representatives of their social groups, or that their behaviours and attitudes extend beyond the time the participants are actively involved; however, such concerns are relevant to all research methods which chart a time and place and not just ethnography.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The early planning considered surveys and questionnaires but kept coming back to the same problem of transient students and the very distinctive multinational mix which changes not only from international school to international school, but from year to year, and so ethnographic interviews appeared to be the obvious choice of methodology.

I was concerned about Pavlenko and Blackledge’s (2004) warnings of simplistic ‘sociopsychological’ approaches in which assumptions are made about an individual’s identity and aspirations because of their membership of a cultural group, and in doing so hybrid identities are effectively ignored. When examining identity negotiation and formation, neither individuals nor ethnic groups can be considered to be homogenous. TIS’s highly mobile multilingual and multicultural setting requires a research design that can address numerous unrelated and shifting variables. Therefore, the ethnographic interview approach is the most logical choice as participants can describe their individual histories and how they negotiate as individuals and as group members, as well as within and between the different groups they operate in.

Having selected the most appropriate methodology for the scene, I designed the initial research. Participants were located, interviews were conducted and transcribed, the data was coded, re-coded and analysed and then participants re-interviewed and the sequence repeated (Spradley 1979). As hypotheses emerged, these too were presented to

the interviewees and discussed with subsequent interviews again transcribed and analysed. Analysis of data continued throughout the write-up stages.

3.2.1 SELECTING AND LOCATING PARTICIPANTS

Participants were located by adhering to Spradley's (1979) guidelines regarding enculturation, current involvement, belonging to an unfamiliar cultural scene and having adequate time. In selecting participants with a full understanding of the expatriate scene, it was not appropriate to interview newly arrived families, so participants were required to have been at TIS for a minimum of one year. They needed to be currently involved as perspectives change over time and reporting with hindsight would invalidate the interviews (Spradley 1979).

Finding participants with adequate time was problematic and the research design changed because of this. Initially locating participants was difficult, partly because I was trying to find a single family, rather than a group of individuals, as the basis for the study. The head of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was approached and asked to help identify potential families. An open invitation was sent out through the PTA but there were no responses. Instead I decided to approach families directly, selecting those identified by the head of the PTA as possible candidates. Using Spradley's (1979) guidelines for locating informants, several families were identified and approached. One family was Malaysian with four school aged children at the school. Initially they agreed and were very interested in participating, but due to unforeseen changes in employment, needed to relocate at short notice and so withdrew from this study which does again highlight the rapid turnover of TIS students. Other candidates included a German/Scottish family with three children. They have lived in different parts of China for fifteen years and were involved in the initial setting up of TIS before moving away. They returned three years ago. They too readily agreed to be interviewed and remained key participants throughout.

The research design changed as the data gathering started. I quickly became aware that the initial plan of interviewing one family numerous times and in great depth was too restrictive; the family made various references to other cultures and nationalities in the school and it was apparent that the scope was too limited to elucidate the multicultural scene, whether in-depth or not. There were too many references to other cultures and so I needed to hear their voices and stories in order to understand and

validate what was being said by the initial family. Based on the initial descriptions of the school, I realised I needed families from different nationalities and more highly mobile participants. At this stage I asked an American and Korean family to participate, these too having been identified by the head of the PTA as fitting my selection criteria. Both families had been on the scene for one year and so were potentially more indicative of the highly mobile families that the initial family

Further problems were encountered. The fathers from both the American and the Korean families, although initially agreeing to participate, were unable to meet due to time restrictions. The mother of the Korean family had not agreed to participate as she was not confident with her English ability and so I only interviewed the son, John. In the end the idea of using families was dropped in favour of a group of adults and students were selected as they matched Spradley's (1979) participant selection guidelines outlined above.

In consideration of the high percentage of Korean students at TIS, it was important to have good representation amongst the participants. In total, five Koreans participated.

3.2.2 ADDRESSING RESEARCHER REACTIVITY

Unless stated, the participants are not related. As it is a small school, I know all the participants and I have taught Charles, Paul and James. This increases the likelihood of researcher reactivity due to coercive power relationships and I needed to address these concerns from the start. The older students were selected for pragmatic reasons. They had various international school experiences, they were old enough to articulate their feelings and views, they were still actively involved in the school and they were accessible. Yet, they were still my students and could therefore be less likely to be fully honest about their feelings about the international school or say anything in which they might feel they are criticising me personally. I have endeavoured to minimise researcher reactivity and my effects on the scene studied, however, I acknowledge that "sometimes the effects can be significant despite the researcher's best efforts" (Hammersley 1992). I addressed this by following Spradley's (1979) guidelines. Participants were put at ease by providing them a full explanation of what I was trying to achieve and ensuring they understood they would have guaranteed anonymity (I explained that their names would be changed and showed them this on the transcripts). To reduce researcher reactivity and participant bias,

respondents understood that they would remain anonymous throughout (see Appendices 1 and 2). While participants' names and other identifying details such as their employers and the name of the school have been changed, their home countries and gender have been identified, as this has significance for understanding cultural issues.

Rapport was established by letting participants talk at length while I showed signs of encouragement, interest and support. Interestingly the participants talked about the relaxed atmosphere of TIS and how teachers are more like friends than teachers, and this too appeared to contribute to reducing the researcher reactivity as students were less likely to worry about consequences of their comments and so could speak more freely. I attempted to make the explanation of the purpose of the research and the methodology as transparent as possible within the confines of the researcher/ participants' relationship; participants were briefed on the purpose of the research and the methodology and were provided with an information sheet to take away and a consent form to sign. All their questions were addressed and as far as I am aware, they were made comfortable in taking part and were clear that they could raise concerns at any stage in the process. Later, casual discussions with some of the participants (Diana, James, Charles, Linda, Harold and Paul) confirmed they felt comfortable during the interview. There is an obvious limit here between what the researcher perceives and what the participants truly believed, but they did appear to be at ease and were quite willing to talk at length, with the notable exception of Susan as is explained in section 3.3.7.

Participants were promised access to their full transcripts if they wished and one person did ask to see them. They were provided with oral summaries of the previous interviews as the starting point of subsequent interviews. Only the researcher and thesis supervisor had access to all transcripts and research notes. These shall be destroyed on completion of the study.

3.2.3 DATA TREATMENT

Initial analysis began as soon as data was collected. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim in order to avoid accidental interpretation in accordance with Spradley's Verbatim Principle (1979). Applying punctuation was problematic as it can suggest subjective emphasis therefore the notation was kept simple in an attempt to catch the reality of the recorded interviews; commas denote a change in flow of meaning and a dash indicates a pause of three seconds or more. A triple dash - - - represents a long

pause, usually when participants were reading something during which time the recorder was kept running. Single quotation marks indicate when they are quoting somebody else or using a different voice.

What was not transcribed is when the participants or researcher uttered words of support after each phrase. In order for the participants to open up, they were encouraged by agreements, smiles and nods of encouragement throughout. I can be heard continually saying “yes”, “really,” and “aha” throughout the recordings. These same automatic responses are heard in the later interviews as I explained the findings to the participants. For the sake of clarity of transcripts, these were not transcribed.

3.2.4 REFERENCING EXTRACTS

The extracts are numbered and collated to aid location with a simple referencing scheme. Each extract has a letter and a number. The letter is the initial of the participant (or first two letters when participants had the same initial) and the number denotes which interview the quote comes from, e.g. D1 is from Diana interview number 1, and Ja4 is from James interview number 4. As indicated above, to aid identification of adults and students, either an ‘a’ for adults or ‘s’ for student is included in their references; so this becomes D1a and Ja4s.

3.2.5 INTERVIEWS

The interviews were carried out in a six month period from May 2006 until October 2006. Most participants were willing to talk at length and open up, with Susan being the notable exception. The tape recorder was discreet and the microphone very small, able to clip onto the participants’ clothes or perch on the desk, and this contributed to the relaxed atmosphere of the sessions. The interviews were coded between sessions with analysis being conducted simultaneously (Pole and Morrison 2003). Data analysis was ongoing. Interviews were transcribed verbatim as soon as possible after the interview, usually the same or following day. This was a lengthy process, but the transcription task greatly aided understanding by immersion into the data to allow interpretations and theories to emerge. Interviews were carried out in the informants’ home or in school. The 33 sessions lasted between 15 to 40 minutes and transcripts were between 2000 and 5000 words.

The interviews have four distinct stages:

- Round 1: open topics
- Round 2: participants asked to respond to the analysis of their first interview
- Round 3: participants asked to respond to general findings from all participants
- Round 4: participants asked to respond to emerging hypotheses

The first interview was carefully managed to ensure the participants were at ease and they could determine the content in order to develop rapport and elicit information (Spradley 1979).

From the outset I had general areas that I wanted to explore (see section 1.2) but I was concerned about researcher and participant reactivity if I was too specific in my questions. In order to elicit responses about the extent to which international schools promote international-mindedness, how the school curriculum reflects the objectives set out by the IBO, and how an understanding of Third Culture Kids and identity formation in a multicultural setting can illuminate the situation for international school children, I generated four open topics for the first round of interviews. My final research aim of exploring the relative advantages and disadvantages of students attending an international school with a highly mobile population compared to their home-country schools was implicit in all topics. Therefore, in an attempt to reduce researcher bias, specific questions were not asked as this could have guided the participants towards areas I wanted them to identify. It was explained that there would not be specific questions in the opening interview and these four broad spectrum topics were identified:

- International schools
- International life
- Language
- Culture

The participants were encouraged to talk about these one after another (Fig 5), but for some there was little distinction between the different topics.

Typical opening questions
(Charles interview 1)
PH I am not going to ask you questions as such at this stage, I am just going to get you to talk to me about general topics.
CIs Ok
PH the first one is international schools. Can you talk to me about your

international school experience?

Or

(Frank interview 1)

PH I am not going to ask you specific question, I am going to ask you to 'talk about', and then if there is anything you mention which I would like you to explain a bit further I shall ask you to do so - first of all, can you talk about international schools?

Figure 5 Typical opening broad spectrum questions

Where ever possible clarifying questions were asked in the informant's own words, that is "in their language" (Spradley 1979). This was to prevent asking judgmental questions and to avoid accidental interpretation. Mostly I would wait until the participant finished a point, letting them speak as long as they wished, except for a few occasions when I asked them to given an example to illustrate what they were saying.

I fully encouraged the participants to determine the direction of their own responses. When asked by participants if their responses were 'correct', my answer was always in the affirmative because as long as they were talking about their perceived experiences they were on the right track.

During the second interviews I reported back to the participants by summarising and using quotes from their first interviews and asked them for clarification and further details. In the third interviews I presented explanations of the findings so far (Figs 6 and 7). Note how this contrasts with the very open manner of the first interview. However, beyond this opening explanation participants were free to go wherever they liked. Here are two examples.

PH What I am doing now is I am at the third stage of the interview process, in the first stage I just had four general areas and I asked people to talk, and in the second stage I asked people to respond to what they had said previously, OK, we are now at the third stage and what I have done is taken all the different details from all the different people and put it together and analysed it, if you can see [shows draft] - - - it looks like this, where I have taken what people have said and I have analysed it so it is coming from all the different participants together, and the way I have organised it is like this [shows contents page listing draft]- - - this is in no particular order, it's how I have identified common themes - - - what I would like to do is go through these and for me to explain what these are and for you to respond to them - so I shall explain what each section is and then if there is any of these you would like to respond to you just say so

Ra so if I want to make a comment?

PH sure, yes, whenever you want -

Ra OK
PH great, the first thing was international life, and people in describing international life the main feature was it is transient - and a lot of that moved into the next area where people talked about friendship which is where we get these quotes such as 'people are always coming and going' or 'my friends they just leave'
Ra yep
PH so in talking about friendship they identified different aspects of friendship- initial friendships, when students arrive at an international school they are made to feel welcome but people 'keep friends at arm's length' and don't want to get too close
Ra that is definitely where I am and that is probably my quote
(PH from R3a)

Figure 6 Explaining findings so far

PH this is the contents page [points to the contents page] and this is the section on the analysis and this shows you how I have grouped it, so if we talk about each section then I'll just try to explain the general findings and then I'll get you to respond to them OK? - this is in no particular order, just how I first identified them OK? - so we'll start with international life - erm - of which a strong theme was friendship - people described lots of 'coming and going', as a very typical feature of international life - they talked about how friends were always leaving - initial friendships, they are very important and strong because you have new people arriving at a new school from very different places, and they describe a very welcoming atmosphere, but the next thing is the suggestion that they keep people at arm's length so there seems to be a bit of a contradiction here, they are very welcoming on arrival, they make a fuss of people but they keep that distance because they know they are going to move on - would you like to comment on any of these? (PH from D3a)

Figure 7 Explaining findings so far ii

As well as explanation of content, I explained the possible limitations of the study (Fig 8).

school size is something that we talked about last time and this kind of negates what I am trying to do because I am looking at international schools and a lot of people are saying that this is because it is a small school, so what I am wondering now is if a small school in China would be comparable to a small school back home? (PH from E3a)

Figure 8 Explaining potential limitations

As hypotheses emerged they were also discussed (Figs 9 and 10). It must be stressed that these were not mentioned until the 4th round of interviews.

some researchers have written about the differences between the school's philosophy and its reality - they use, as an example the desire for students to be international and have

respect for other cultures - could you comment on this and how you see this happening in the school? (PH from Ja4s)

Figure 9 Explaining emerging ideas i

PH what I am trying to do now is now is finish off my research by telling the people I have interviewed some of the ideas I have come up with, then I can get you to talk about those ideas
now there were three ideas, one is to do with cultural dissonance in the school, this works in three ways, the first is that the headmaster and the teachers are mainly from Europe, America, Australia, New Zealand, while the student population do not - and also that the IB curriculum comes from Europe - the next is the difference between the Koreans and non-Koreans, and then between the people of the school and the local community, so there are lots of areas where we should be working together, but perhaps that is not happening -
the second thing is called the 'bubble' and this is to do with lots of people describing how they live in a compound and in the compound they either speak English or Korean, depending on where they are living, they come to school in private car or bus and in the school they are still in the bubble and they hardly ever go out of this bubble, in fact one person I interviewed said they find out more about China by watching Discovery Channel than they do in person
the third area is to do with identity and Third Culture Kids, have you heard this term?
Ls like us [laughs]
PH and this is not a new thing but it is something that has come through very strongly so it is something that I need to talk about because this is what the people, the people I have interviewed have talked about, so there are three things, cultural dissonance, the bubble and Third Culture Kids and I would like you to talk about these (from L4s and H4s)

Figure 10 Explaining emerging ideas ii

Interviews were positive and enjoyable experiences, with one notable exception. Susan was reluctant to speak. Perhaps she was shy of the researcher or unhappy about participating in a conversation which was pitched at quite a high level when her mother was talking. The extract below (Fig 11) shows how Diana started to take over the interview, provided answers and Susan was left to agree or disagree with statements her mother made. Diana talked at length about numerous issues while Susan only spoke when her mother prompted or coaxed or cajoled.

D2a ... what about you Susan?
S2s - erm - [shakes head]
PH this is a very difficult question to answer
D2a try and think about the situation in school Susan, that's the main area where you come into contact with this, right? trying to identify who you are, what do you

think your identity is? you're Scottish and you are German right, but you also identify with China because you were born here and you grew up here -

S2s aha [sighs]-

D2a does it create a problem? do you get used to it?

S2s it's just I've been in international schools and been around so many people from different languages I am just used to it - but you know, I don't have to speak different languages to all my friends coz they all speak English, so it's ok -

D2a did it even come up as an issue between you and your friends that you were that nationality and they were a different nationality?

S2s no, except when the Koreans only speak Korean and we don't understand sometimes and that's about it -

D2a do you have to change the way you behave when you are in Scotland or Germany or China?

S2s no, I don't think so

Figure 11 Extract from D2a and S2s

Susan's reluctance to speak became more and more evident as the second interview continued until she laid her head on the table in complete boredom. I asked her if she wanted to contribute anything further and when she said 'no' I thanked her for attending and she was free to go. The interview continued with Diana only and because of her negative attitude to the process I did not ask Susan to participate in further interviews. Had Susan been older, I would have interviewed her alone from the start, but in consideration of research ethics given Susan's age, I asked for Susan's mother to be present when I interviewed Susan. This became counter-productive as Diana dominated Susan's responses.

3.2.6 CODING, ANALYSIS AND WRITING THE ETHNOGRAPHY.

"Writing, in one sense, is a refined process of analysis" (Spradley 1979: 94).

The research stages overlapped with the differences between coding, analysis and write-up becoming nebulous, as the ethnographic data collection, discovery and theory construction occurred simultaneously (Spradley 1979). Instead of following individual accounts, a more holistic approach to the data has been used and so the coding process has led to the creation of common, reoccurring or strong ideas and themes (as identified by the researcher) for analysis. These segments were gathered together and regrouped and sometimes recoded to explicitly address major themes.

The purpose of coding is to look for relationships in the data, construct new ideas,

organise emerging topics into smaller and larger groups and reorganise the concepts (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Pole and Morrison 2003). Codes are heuristic devices and so serve to stimulate investigation, being one of a “range of approaches to aid organization, retrieval and interpretation of data.” (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). The reordering of data allows the transcripts to be seen from novel perspectives and in different contexts. As instruments of the researcher, codes can be modified during repeated interactions with the data as patterns emerge. As well as simplifying, coding allows for data to expand to explore significance and to transform content so it can be re-conceptualised (Spradley 1979). This aids the collection of examples of phenomena and assists analysis by identifying commonalities, differences, patterns and structures by condensing the bulk of the data into easily analysable units (Coffey and Atkinson 1996).

Coding was performed in several ways. During transcription I jotted down ideas as they occurred to me in my journal (a journal was kept throughout to record findings and impressions and was invaluable when writing up the thesis as it served to justify the research methods and decisions throughout). Once transcripts were compiled I printed off hard copies and re-read them, noting ideas, highlighting themes and looking for strong ideas or patterns. I made notes on the scripts and colour-coded ideas. At first there was no discernible sequence to these notes, simply an attempt to deconstruct and reorganise. I proceeded onto subsequent transcripts and repeated the sequence. Several times I regrouped the ideas, domains and sub-domains. For example the early domain ‘friendship’ initially contained a section on ‘languages’, but in the end ‘languages’ became the basis for a separate section while ‘friendship’ became a sub-section elsewhere. Other sub-domains expanded such as the Korean and non-Korean divide which overlapped languages, international schools and cultural dissonance.

Once the data had been coded and re-coded enough times for rudimentary patterns to emerge, I made use of NVivo7, a computer program designed to help qualitative research. The transcripts from round 1, and later round 2, were imported into NVivo7 and arranged into a new set of domains. I printed off hard copies and these were again annotated as I read and re-read them looking for ideas and themes. This was a gradual process and I kept reading the scripts until ideas did eventually emerge. Appendix 8 shows a sample print off from the NVivo7, with my handwritten notes, after the first round of interviews had been inputted.

There are various advantages to the use of computer programs to support

ethnographic studies and Seale (2005) identifies the speed of handling large volumes of data that, in theory, frees up the researcher for higher level analysis, the improvement of rigour which on a simple level is the counting of instances of a phenomena and the notion that researchers using computerised coding systems should be able to share coding methods. Seale makes valid points about speeding up the process, but this is not necessarily the same as freeing up researchers for higher level analysis. I found the opposite to be true; it was the physical process of manual interaction with the data and immersion into the transcripts that allowed the foundations for critical thinking. Although the groupings in NVivo7 were helpful in the initial stages to provide an initial outline of the shape of the thesis, I found NVivo7 to be limited and not necessary for this study as the small number of transcripts did not require computer aided software; and so this package was not used beyond what has been described here.

The final sequence of coding created documents which grouped the various extracts together into domains and sub-domains. More detailed analysis of these grouping followed and they eventually evolved into chapters and sections. The aim of the analysis is to reconstruct the data to embody social phenomena, which in an ethnographic approach is an approximation or representation of the participants' social accounts (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). The continuing methodical coding and examination allowed me to engage with the data, as I reorganised the content to find new outlines and as I moved from initial impressions to conceptualise more complex connotations and eventual theory development.

Analysis was not a distinct stage but started during the transcribing of interviews, continued throughout each coding stage and also during further data collection as emerging ideas were checked to construct hypotheses. Using Spradley's (1979) model, I wrote up my initial findings as early as I could and then used these to return to the data collection to delve deeper. Once the primary data had been coded and recoded and analysed, it was compared with research into existing literature (Pole and Morrison 2003) and I conducted a second extensive literature search.

The analysis of the interviews was achieved by immersion in the data. This was the most difficult part of the research process as I struggled to make sense of the various ideas. The relatively few number of transcripts allowed for familiarity and in-depth understanding as they were read numerous times looking for themes and ideas to emerge. The transcripts were annotated, initially by ramblings and notes about ideas or

repetitions, until ideas eventually formed. Then scripts were re-read looking for further evidence to support the emerging themes, ideas and eventually theories. Once the initial groupings occurred, the backbone to the thesis write-up was established, though this too was to continue to change in response to the direction the data and critical analysis, thus displaying the flexibility that characterises ethnography. The thesis was written in stages with the initial outline created after the first round of interviews, coding and analysis. The final version changed and transformed numerous times during the final stages of analysis. Some topics were moved several times as the write-up took a form of its own. Re-coding and re-grouping continued and ideas were relocated to where they made most sense during the continual redrafting. Finally, the original transcripts were re-read in their original form to ensure the 'sense' of the interviews had been kept integral throughout the analysis.

3.3 THE SETTING

This section provides background data so the ethnographic analysis can be understood in the context of the setting. The information is provided here to allow the reader to see the demographics of nationalities and ages. Also included are descriptions of the school, the student population and the teaching body. This was compiled between January and April 2006 and all details were accurate as of May 1st 2006. Data is used by the kind permission of the school's Director.

3.3.1 TEST INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The setting for the research is an international school in China and the expatriate community it serves. The school was founded by a group of parents in 1990 and was then only for very young children in rented rooms in a local language school. It gradually renovated buildings in a local hotel and grew to some 300 students from its original 5. In 2004, TIS moved into its new campus in a newly constructed university area on the outskirts of the city. At the commencement of this study, the school had 355 students from 24 nationalities and 71 teaching staff originating from 14 countries. The school is a non-profit parent cooperative and is overseen by a Board of 9 elected parents and local expatriate volunteers. TIS is fully recognised by the Chinese authorities as a legitimate school rather than as a business. The Director and a Staff Representative are non-voting members of the Board. The age range is 3-19 and the school is organised into two divisions; Elementary (pre-K to Grade 5), and Secondary (Grade 6-12).

The mission statement identifies the school's aims and philosophy which can be summarised in three areas: commitment to the IB programmes; promoting internationalism; and supporting all students in fulfilling their social and academic potential.

TIS has designed a curriculum to fully implement the three IB programmes and the IBO's ethos. As an IB world school, TIS promotes international understanding in several ways. Students from Grades 6 to 12 take part in community activities which includes teaching English at local schools or going on trips to poor parts of the country to build schools or donate equipment. The recently introduced IB Learner Profile (appendix 4) is currently being used to report student achievement in the Elementary section with plans to extend this into the Secondary section during 2007-2008. Each year a student is awarded the CIS award for promoting internationalism. Several courses including languages A1 and A2, Geography, History and Theory of Knowledge include content from different cultures around the world. In addition, International Day and United Nations Day provide a platform for different cultures to display their national dress, music, food and customs. Numerous extracurricular home language classes are facilitated by the school. These classes are taught by native speakers from the local expatriate population (mainly university students or mothers/wives from the TIS expatriate community).

Students attending TIS are mostly from educated, professional families. The cost of tuition is approximately US\$20,000 per student per year. The vast majority of parents have tuition fees paid by their company as part of their overseas package.

Many international schools worldwide have significant numbers of local students. This is not the case in China as regulations do not permit Chinese children with a Chinese passport to attend either international schools or the international sections of state schools (Yamato and Bray 2006). All children attending TIS have foreign passports.

The main reason parents select TIS is because it is the only international school in a developing city which is seeing rapid growth, enough to justify the existence of an expatriate community. Unlike many other international schools in South East Asia, TIS does not have direct competition in the city. Chinese schools are available but there are significant language barriers. There have been some attempts to set up other international schools for religious purposes but these are very small-scale affairs (3-6 children) and are run as home schooling ventures. The lack of choice is due to the relatively small number

of expatriates living in the area. Current trends suggest that as China's economy continues to rapidly expand, China's expatriate population will also increase. As more regions outside of Beijing and Shanghai develop, it is likely that new international schools will open in other cities and have similar experiences to those described by the participants in this research and in Poore's (2005) accounts of international school communities in Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. This growth may also see the TIS expatriate population increase enough to justify the setting up of a second international school. TIS parents' other options are home schooling or boarding opportunities elsewhere.

The school has an 'open door' policy of accepting all expatriate students in the local community. TIS has 48% Koreans with the second largest group being Germans with 13.5%. This is not evenly spread throughout the grades, so that some classes have a much higher Korean percentage with the most extreme case being Grade 10 with 72% Korean and 2 native English speakers out of 22 students. Participants identified this number as a factor in many Korean students not speaking English and preferring Korean as a social language. At the same time non-Korean students have reduced exposure to English and this creates cultural dissonance as many Korean students are at odds with the Western philosophy of the school as embodied in the mission statement, curriculum and staff. This was discussed by the participants (see section 6.3). At TIS, the dominant student culture is either Korean or an amalgamation of other cultures, whom all participants referred to as 'non-Koreans', while the culture of the administration, teachers and curriculum is Anglo-American dominated.

Korean families mostly live in a compound which is conveniently located for the main Korean companies and projects. The other expatriates are mainly located in two compounds which are within ten minutes drive of the school, with the exception of a recent influx of families that live in a new compound close to a new American owned factory. The isolated situation of the international school, in terms of drawing upon expatriates living in China and voluntarily living in compounds separate from the local Chinese population for reasons of security and comfort of living, reinforces the importance of the international school and the overlap of school and home life as parents, students and teachers mostly live in these four compounds.

Currently there is no dialogue within the school to discuss the possible effects of compound life on the TIS students.

3.3.2 STUDENT DATA: NATIONALITIES AND AGES

The next few pages contain figures and charts showing the numbers of students and their nationalities. I have selected some of the more pertinent data such as a whole school overview and a selection of grades. A full breakdown of student numbers, nationalities and percentages by grade is in Appendix 3. This is raw data and is included so the reader can better understand the references made to languages and cultural issues in the following chapters.

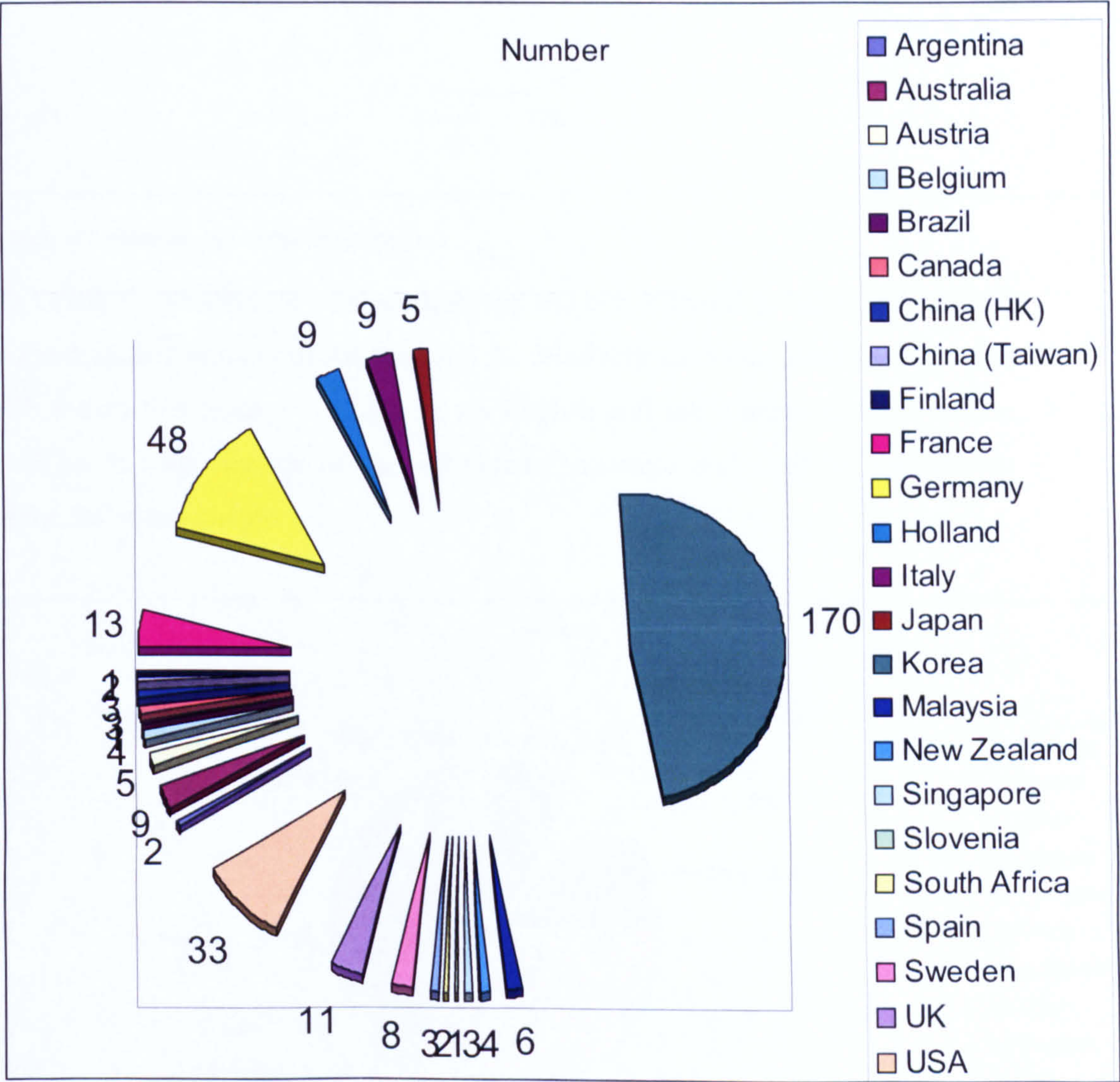


Figure 12 Student nationalities by numbers, grades Pre-K to 12

This chart (Figure 12) shows the obvious dominance of the Korean population.

The next five charts (Figures 13 to 17) show how the percentages changes at each grade.

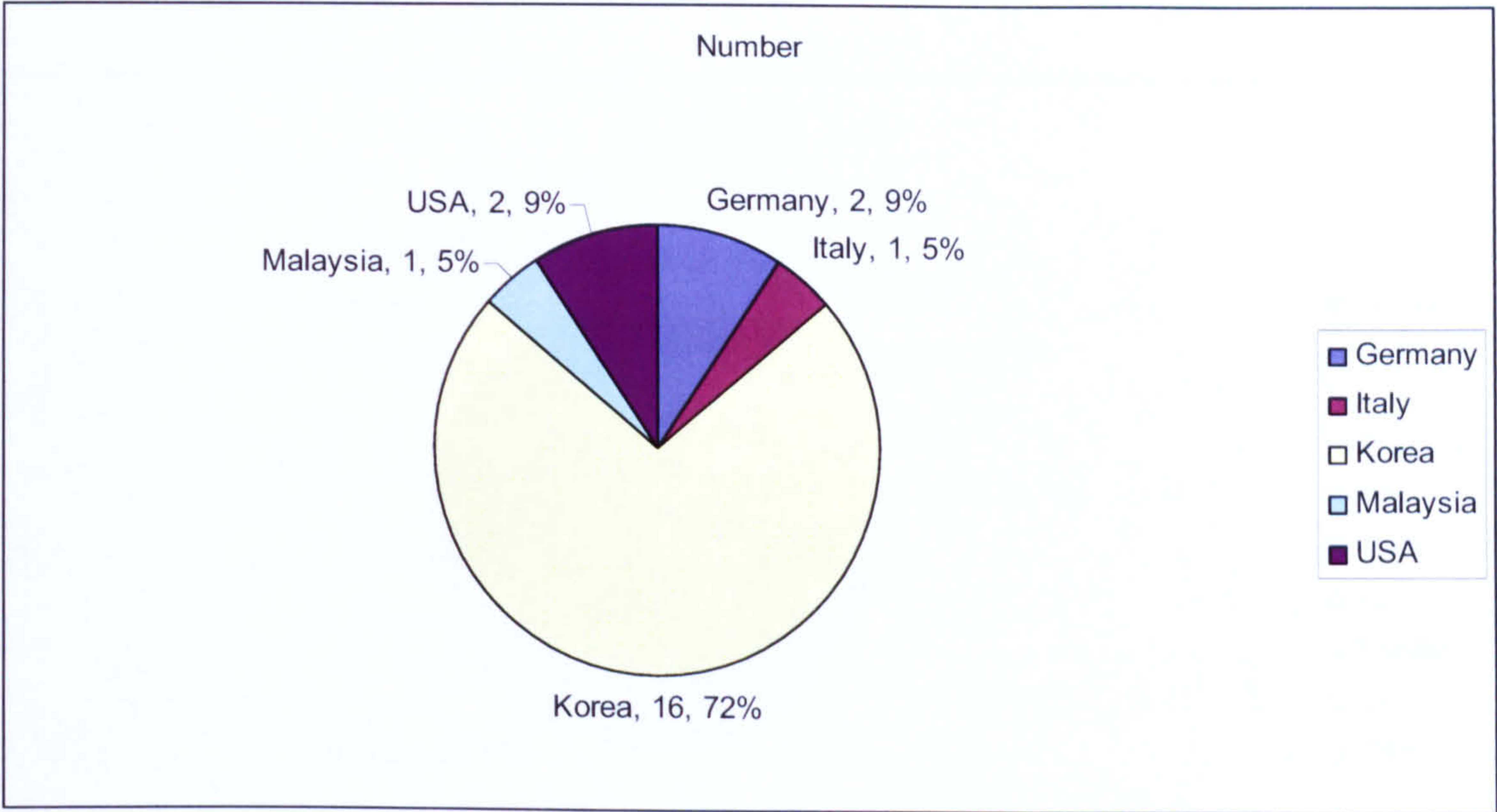


Figure 13 Grade 10 nationalities by number and percentage

In Grade 10, dissonance between Koreans and non-Koreans is most evident. This is due to the dominant number of Koreans and the relatively short time most have spent at TIS which means that many have little or no English and use Korean as the common language. This is a key feature of the participants’ accounts and shall be discussed at length in the following chapters.

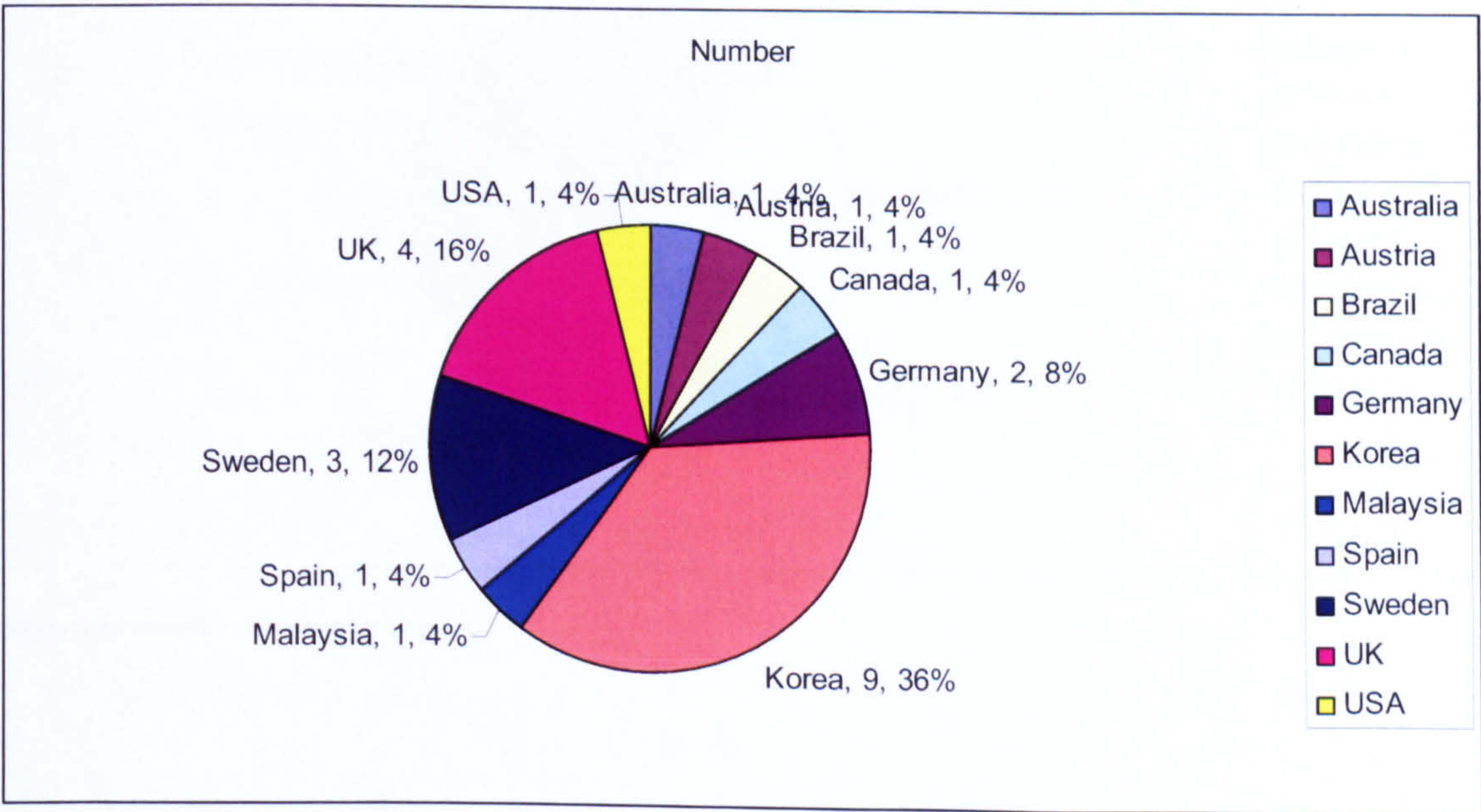


Figure 14 Grade 8 nationalities by number and percentage

In all grades the Koreans are the dominant group, but some grades have more of a balance between Koreans and non-Koreans, and/or have more Native English Speakers.

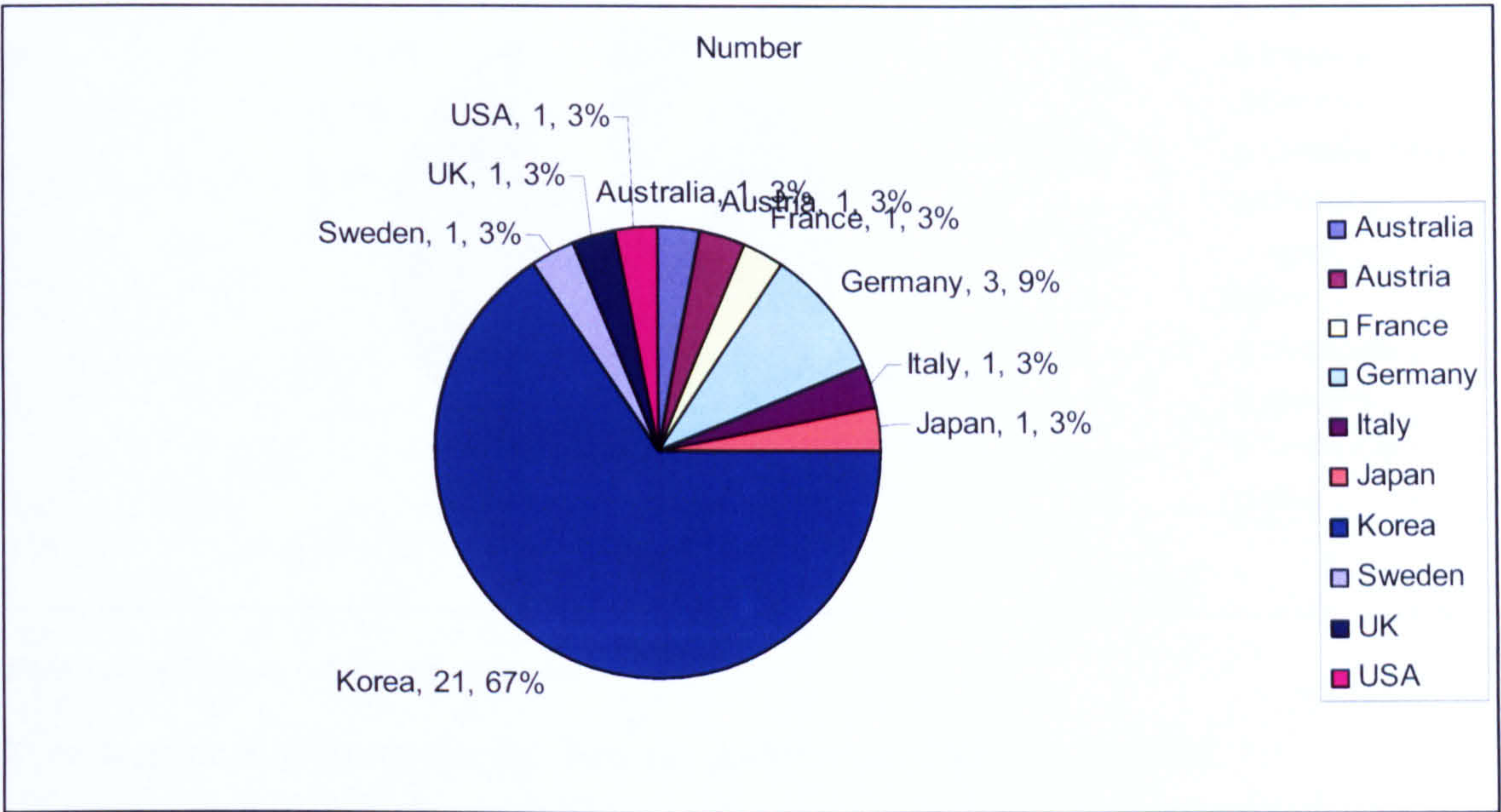


Figure 15 Grade 6 nationalities by number and percentage

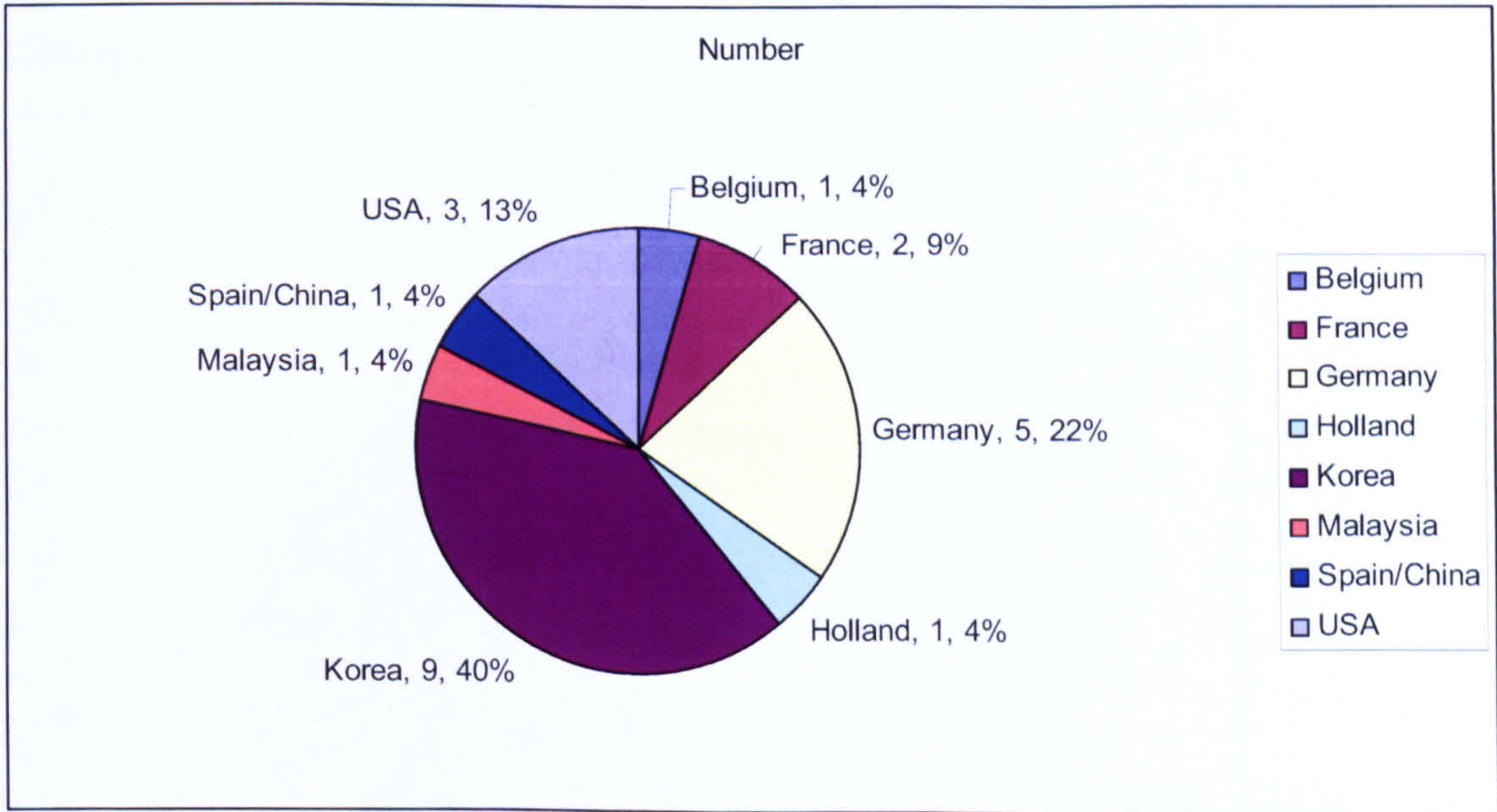


Figure 16 Grade 3 nationalities by number and percentage

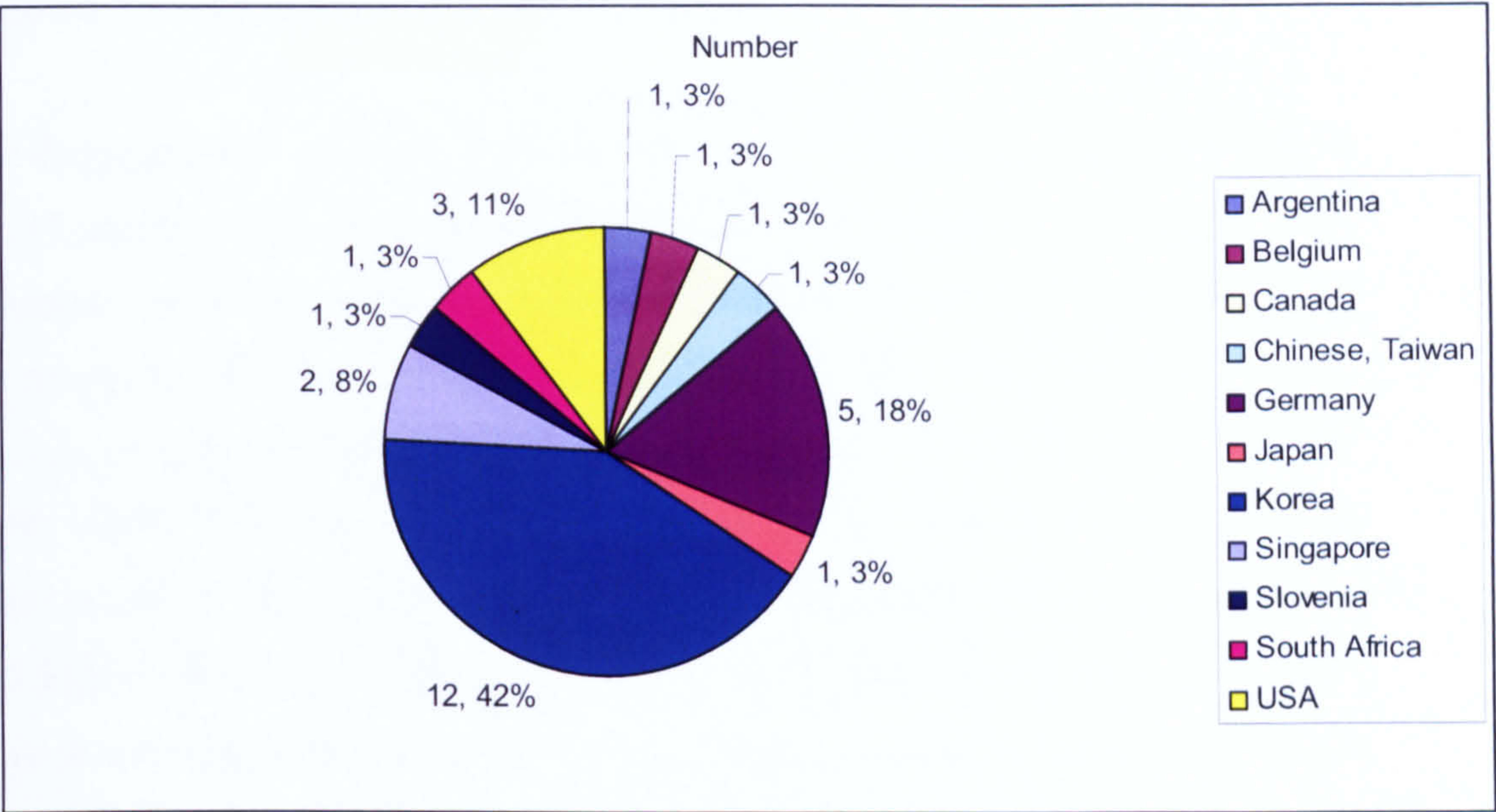


Figure 17 Grade 1 nationalities by number and percentage

At each grade the figures clearly show the dominance of Korean students.

3.3.3 TEACHERS' NATIONALITIES AND LENGTH OF SERVICE

I have included teachers' nationalities and length of time at the school as these were also discussed at length by the participants when exploring cultural dissonance and transient lifestyles (Fig 18).

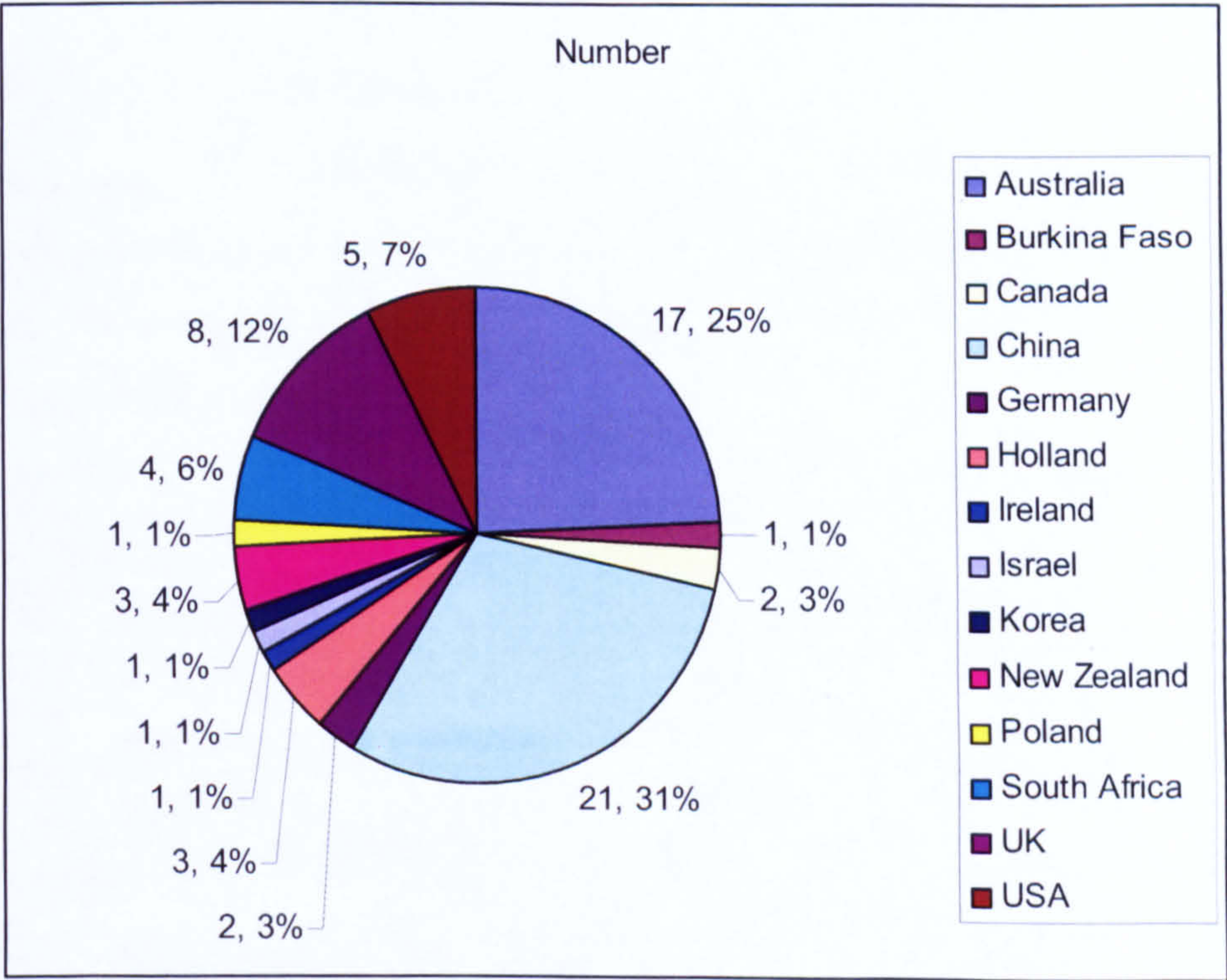


Figure 18 Nationalities of teachers by number and percentage

The dominant staff group in terms of numbers are Chinese and they fall into two categories; 18 teaching assistants and 8 Chinese language teachers. Children encounter Chinese teachers in three areas; as teaching assistants, as language teachers or as homeroom teachers. All other subjects are taught by overseas staff. One Chinese person holds a senior position as Head of Language B and all other academic positions of responsibility within the school are held by overseas staff. There are no Chinese members of the school board. There are numerous guards and workmen (all male) and cleaners (all female and addressed as ‘Ayi’ which means Aunty) in highly visible menial roles. There are 24 Chinese administration staff in professional though less visible roles e.g. accounts, resources, purchasing, facilities management and ICT support.

The next largest group is Australian followed by UK then USA. All the members of the SMT are from UK, USA and Australia. Except for the Chinese Head of Department (HOD), all other HODs come from UK, South Africa, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or America. Note that non-Chinese staff are predominantly from Australia, USA, UK, New Zealand, South Africa or Europe, which is why they are referred to as ‘Western’.

3.3.4 TURN OVER RATES

The average time overseas hires spend at TIS is 2.58 years (May 2006). This was calculated by adding up the number of years of service at TIS including the present year and dividing by the number of teachers. Only two members of staff have been at the school for more than five years.

Figure 19 demonstrate the % of overseas staff turnover and shows the numbers of people who have left the school.

2003/2004	Total	Left	%
Overseas Staff	38	9	24%
Chinese Teacher	5	3	60%
Chinese TA	12	2	17%
Chinese Administrative	15	1	7%
2004/2005	Total	Left	
Overseas Staff	48	10	20.8%

Chinese Teacher	6	0	-
Chinese TA	15	0	-
Chinese Administrative	22	0	-
2005/2006	Total	Left	
Overseas Staff	51	15	29.4%
Chinese Teacher	8	1	12.5%
Chinese TA	18	0	-
Chinese Administrative	25	0	-

Figure 19 Turn over rates at TIS

According to the calculations provided by the school’s Admissions Officer, the average length of time a student spends at TIS is 2.1 years (May 2006).

3.3.5 THE PARTICIPANTS

Five adults (a) and eight students (s) took part. In the write-up that follows, ‘a’ denotes ‘adult’ and ‘s’ is ‘student’. All names have been changed.

Diana (Da) is Scottish and her husband Brian (Ba) is from Germany. They have lived in China for 15 years and they are the parents of Susan and Charles. Brian works for a large international company and Diana runs an educational organisation in a smaller city about 100 miles away. Their son Charles (Cs) is 17 years old and his sister Susan (Ss) is 11. Charles and Susan have had a mix of Chinese schooling, international schools and home tutoring. Most of their education has been at small international schools. Charles first attended TIS in 1996-98 and returned in 2003.

Roxanna (Ra) is American and her husband works for a large international company. She has been in China for one year after spending several years in Indonesia. She has one daughter at TIS.

Eileen (Ea) is Korean. Her English husband works for an international company. She has lived in China for five years and has two children at TIS.

Marlin (Ma) was asked to be a participant after a Korean father who had initially agreed to take part found he no longer had time to meet (John’s father). Marlin is Korean and works part time at the school as a liaison officer providing translation services for the Korean community. In addition he runs Saturday Korean classes at the international school. He has been in China for 6 years as a mature student to study Chinese medicine. Marlin joined after the first two rounds were completed. Marlin does not have children at the school, but is very involved in the Korean community. I was unable to get other

Korean adult males (i.e. fathers) to participate so I asked him as a proxy parent.

Frank (Fs) is Italian, 18 years old and has spent four years in China. At the commencement of the interviews, he had planned to stay longer and attend local university to study Chinese for one year, but his father was relocated at short notice and so he left after only one interview. Again this demonstrates the temporary nature of TIS expatriate life.

Linda (Ls) is Korean, 17 years old and she has lived in China for three years. This is her first international school and her first school outside of Korea, although she did attend an English language summer camp in Canada before arriving.

John (Jos) is Korean, 15 years old and has attended TIS for four years; this is his first school outside of Korea. His father works for a large Korean company.

Harold (Hs) is an 18 year old Korean boy. He has been in China for two years and previously studied for three years at an international school in Vietnam.

Paul (Ps) is 17 and Austrian. His parents are from mainland China and they moved to Austria before Paul was born. Paul’s family moved to China in 2004 on a three year contract with a large international company.

James (Jas) is a German 18 year old. When the interviews started he was in his final year. He has since left the international school but is staying in China for one more year in order to study Mandarin.

Most participants were interviewed between two and four times. Frank was only interviewed once as he unexpectedly had to return to Italy. John was replaced with Harold (Hs) after the first interview as it became apparent his English levels were not adequate for him to explain his situation and frustrations. The numbers of interviews are shown in Figure 20.

	Name	int1	Int2	int3	int4	additional discussion
1	Diana (Da)	*	*	*	*	*
2	Brian (Ba)	*			*	
3	Charles (Cs)	*	*	*	*	
4	Susan (Ss)	*	*			
5	Eileen (Ea)	*	*	*		*
6	Roxanna (Ra)	*	*	*	*	*
7	Marlin (Ma) (replaced John’s father)			*	*	
8a	John (Jo s)	*				

8b	Harold (Hs) (replaced John)			*	*
	Frank (Fs) (left at short notice,	*			
9	was not replaced)				
10	Linda (Ls)	*		*	*
11	Paul (Ps)	*	*	*	*
12	James (Ja s)	*	*	*	*

Figure 20 Number of interviews for each participant.

While this chart shows 36 interviews, the total number of separate interviews was 33 as Susan and Diana were interviewed together twice, and Harold and Linda once. Susan and Diana were interviewed jointly because of Susan’s age and to pre-empt concerns about unethical approaches. Harold and Linda’s joint interview was because of pressing time as it was the last day before they returned to Korea for a vacation.

‘Additional discussion’ refers to follow-up conversations which were not recorded or transcribed. Roxanna, Eileen and Diana are frequent visitors to the school to collect their children and on occasions we discussed my research and I asked them to clarify certain points. I made notes on these casual conversations shortly after.

The informants chosen do not share the same cultural scene as is traditionally defined except by chance; they are all foreigners living in China at the same time, being more of a temporary amalgamation or nexus rather than a permanent culture. Their shared culture is different to the scenes described by most ethnographers as the language and culture is constantly negotiated depending on which nationalities and cultures are currently present.

4 EXPERIENCES OF A HIGHLY MOBILE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL POPULATION

Chapters 4 to 6 present the ethnographic interview findings and analysis as organised into the domains that developed during the investigation. This chapter explores the life experiences of international school families and covers high mobility, forming of friendships, negotiating identities and living in an isolated island-like community. This provides the basis for the following chapters which explore in more depth the participants' perspectives of their lives in the international school community and conflicts between cultures and languages.

As outlined in section 3.2.5, the first interview was 'open' (Spradley 1979) with participants asked to respond to the general topics of international life, international school, language and culture. Participants were encouraged to talk at length and to determine the direction of the interviews, as ethnography is "a human process which relies on first-hand experiences of other people's lives." (Pole and Morrison 2003). Participants' discussed the high frequency of turnover, changing schools, living in isolated expatriate compounds, languages, intercultural relationships, cultural divisions high mobility and various types of friendships.

TIS exists because of global economic developments that have led to the creation of numerous expatriate communities worldwide (Poore 2005, MacDonald 2006) and this featured in participants' discussions of the school. They also discussed the barriers to integrating with the local Chinese community and the isolated nature of compound life.

4.1 "PEOPLE ARE CONSTANTLY COMING AND GOING"

One strong characteristic of almost all discussions of international life for TIS students is its very transient nature. The data provided in section 3.3 demonstrates the turnover rates at TIS with the average time at the school for students being 2.1 years and 2.58 years for teachers, far short of Farber and Sutherland's (2006) average of 4.01 years. According to the interviewees, the majority of expatriate families stay between one and three years, or for the Koreans between three and five. Exceptions to this are rare and only two families have stayed in the school community for more than ten years, one being Brian, Diana, Charles and Susan. This may allow international school children to have a sense of freedom in that they have the ability to traverse more than one culture

comfortably (Allan 2003), but also it can result in mobile international children frequently undergoing acculturation and experiencing relocation stresses for significant parts of their childhood, the long term effects of which are unknown (Ezra 2003) but may contribute to the life-long feelings of 'not belonging' (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Straffon 2002).

A student's length of time at TIS is determined by their parent's contracts. 11 year-old Susan very simply explained the reasons for such high mobility in the school;

usually it's their father's jobs, so they have to move (S1s)

Roxanna explained that her husband's company likes to have the flexibility to only offer short term contracts of one to three years, so they can move people on as and when it suits their needs in a changing market environment. Some expatriate workers are brought in for specific projects and will leave once the assignment is completed. Others have come to train Chinese workers and once they have done so, will leave. Brian explained that TIS's location is a less favourable posting compared to Shanghai and Beijing and many expatriates will accept short-term contracts of two to three years maximum to put them in line for a more favourable post elsewhere. Diana pointed out that there are many other contributing factors such as pollution and the perceived difficulties of leaving the expatriate compounds.

Diana discussed the frustrations for many qualified and experienced women feeling trapped in the compound with little opportunity to use their professional skills and how their husbands consider this when extending contracts, also making them more likely to move on. Roxanna said that if she had the opportunity she would relocate to Shanghai 'in a heartbeat' because of the extra amenities and opportunities for activities (e.g. sports and clubs). As the school's location is without the opportunities for foreigners to access a full range of restaurants, international flights, entertainment, activities and goods such as are available in Shanghai and Beijing, this too is a factor in high mobility. Roxanna factored this in with TIS being a small school, in that her daughter would have more opportunities for classes, activities and friendships elsewhere. Roxanna also considered choices of schools; although she liked the international school, she reported that frequently Western mothers discussed their preference for British or American schools so they could have curriculum consistency and be able to easily return to their home country. From these comments it appears the geographic location of the TIS

community in being isolated from the opportunities offered in larger cities, increases anxieties and reduces the desire to remain.

In the accounts of life in such temporary conditions, two aspects regarding 'time' emerged: the first is the short-term existence and the second is uncertainty about duration. These are found in the accounts of language acquisitions, interactions with the local community, friendships, school experiences and planning for the future. Again and again the notion of transience came through as a strong factor when describing international school life (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Ezra 2003).

you realise that nothing is lasting here, friendships and housing and schooling, it's all a little bit insecure, next year it could be different or gone, I don't know, we have moved house I think six or seven times - it's not scary as such, it's just a little bit - it's always something that is unknown, it is always changing constantly (C1s)

Charles has perhaps synthesised these experiences and although he uses the word 'insecure', he adds he is not scared by them and accepts they are characteristics of his life. The terms 'gone', 'insecure', 'unknown' and 'always changing constantly' highlight the negative influences of high mobility (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). Charles sees his friends disappear each year and therefore experiences acculturation as a constant process in response to the changing environment (Ezra 2003).

"Besides a TCK's personal mobility, every third culture community is filled with people who continually come and go." (Pollock and Van Reken 1999: 60)

Low labour costs and a booming economy in China have attracted international companies and with them international families (Yamato and Bray 2006). TIS's expatriate community exists because of the global market and specifically the factors that make operations in China more attractive than elsewhere in the world (Churchill 1996, Poore 2005, Bottery 2006, Davies 2006, Yamato and Bray 2006, MacDonald 2006). As is the nature of a market-driven environment, fluctuations and changes are a constant feature with impermanence and transience being key characteristics of highly mobile international school children's life (Ezra 2003). TIS expatriates, except those with permanent Chinese passports i.e. returning Chinese nationals or those married to Chinese partners, are temporary and they do not have residency rights. Residence visas are granted for a year at a time providing proof of employment is given. Some long term expatriate workers buy properties, as rental is high (Diana and Brian), but they shall not

be able to retire to China under current state legislation so that even if foreign families would like to stay, they are unable to unless they have a work contract.

Sometimes families are given little warning about moving; parents are involved with the logistics of relocating and so the children may not feel they are part of the decision making process and they may not be prepared mentally or emotionally for the upheaval and transition (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Ezra 2003). Movement between countries is stressful and children may not understand why they are moving, or be fully prepared for relocating, especially if the move is at short notice and parents are under pressure and the departure entails saying goodbye to family, friends, pets and established routines (Hess and Linderman 2002, Ezra 2003). Eileen explained both the positive and negative effects of the movements;

the good thing is my children can learn the different culture, the bad thing is, sometime lots of students are coming and leaving so fast and they can make friends but they go, that's typical (E1a)

The emphasis on friendship is perhaps indicative of the stresses for highly mobile TIS expatriates. For Susan, who has lived in China her entire life and seen numerous families come and go, friendships with TIS expatriates are not something she believes she can rely on and later this point is reinforced by Brian;

Chinese friends tend to be constant while the foreigners always leave (B4a)

Brian uses the adverb 'always' to reinforce the idea that this is a key characteristic of the TIS community. Brian, who has lived with his family in China since 1994, talked about the lack of consistency, knowing that he too can be replaced at any time.

there is no job security these days, if one manager of my department makes a big mistake then it is my head and I have to go, so even if I am supposed to stay here for a long time, I mean if my name is in the press next week because of some big mistake or accident then I am out and it's quite simple and that happens to everyone (B4a)

The level of uncertainty regarding duration of stay was identified as a factor by most participants when making friends, learning language or attempting to interact with the Chinese community (although Brian and Diana disagreed). Some expatriates may know how long they shall stay e.g. teachers at the international school sign an initial two year contract with the option to renew annually thus knowing they have a set period of time and can plan their lives accordingly. Others, as evidenced by the participants,

usually only have between one and three month's notice before relocating and the threat of moving always hangs over like the Sword of Damocles.

in the beginning we were only meant to be staying for two years but now it looks like it might even be longer than that, four year or five years maybe, but we don't know (P3s)

The '*we don't know*' emphasises the sense of temporariness and combined with Eileen's words '*that's typical*' demonstrates its generalisation to the TIS expatriate community. Many families have previously lived through similar short-term postings elsewhere which reinforces the sense of transientness (e.g. Roxanna, James, Harold and Eileen).

Another example of this came from Frank, not so much from what he said, but the fact that he left without warning. In "locating informants", it is essential that they have adequate time for subsequent interviews (Spradley 1979). Frank was just finishing his final year at TIS when he agreed to take part as he was planning to stay for an additional year, having enrolled on the same course as James to study Mandarin, so he could remain with his family and friends. However, after the summer vacation he did not return as his father was relocated to another project. This makes his comments during his only interview even more prophetic;

at first I knew I would be here for two years, then my dad made his contract longer, maybe also because I told him I wanted to finish school at China at the international school because I thought the IB programme is fairly - well thought over basically, it gives you a lot of knowledge that you can apply in the future so I said 'Dad, I like China and I wouldn't mind staying at international school to finish my high school' (F1s)

Other participants also described their transient lives and how this tempers much of what they think and do, for example Roxanna talked about not being prepared to invest the time and effort into learning to speak Chinese. Most of the TIS expatriate community are able to function effectively without speaking Chinese, therefore as Charles, James and Diana report, it is not necessary for them to do so.

I have known over the years, really nice people who were excellent teachers and administrators and what have you, who spent in one case four years and another five years in China and could still not order a taxi in Chinese at the end of that time, were still dependent on people to help them out (D3a)

Roxanna claimed that if she knew for definite she would be spending several years in China, she would be more likely to commit to learning the language. The irony is

when people do end up spending several years in China and do not speak any Chinese. Attitudes to speaking Chinese are discussed in more detail in section 6.2.

4.1.1 STUDENTS' CONCERNS ABOUT TIS'S HIGHLY MOBILE POPULATION

Participants described the effects of a highly transient school population with a high turn-over rate of foreign teachers and students. Data presented in section 3.3 demonstrates the high turnover rates of TIS staff and Charles, Paul and James reported the impact of this on students and the disruption this can cause to their studies.

when you have teachers that are there for one or two years, I guess most teachers stay for longer than that but sometimes the year that you arrive if the teacher has already been there several years and they might leave soon afterwards, I guess that might be a disadvantage as some teachers might not have taught the IB programme before and they are still getting used to that while teaching you, I guess it takes the teachers a while to acclimatise (C1s)

fortunately I did not experience that but I did hear from a number of people, especially once it gets to the IB Diploma and it's the last two years and one of the worse things is between Grade 11 and 12 is if you change teachers in a subject and what makes it even worse is it could be a subject you are not particularly good at, I think it's happened this year, there are lots of new teachers and I know one person who has four new teachers in four different subjects (Ja3s)

New teachers will take time to understand the IB programme as they would with any new curriculum and student participants (James, Paul, Charles) claim to have suffered as a result. Given that the average time a teacher spends at TIS is 2.58 years (April 2006), a significant percentage of that time could be taken up with acclimatising before they are able to confidently deliver the IB programme, before preparing to leave. The number of TIS teachers 'acclimatising' each year is 20% to 30% (2004-2006). This figure is not one group of teachers leaving and being replaced while a core group remains, it is all the overseas staff; only two overseas teachers at TIS have spent five or more years at the school, one of them being the Director.

The impact of high movement of students is evident too. TIS produces a yearbook with photographs of each class. Looking through the books from two or three years ago, very few students remain in each year-group.

in other schools you have groups that stay fairly constant usually but in schools like this where people are constantly coming and going the groups are always changing (C1s)

One experience all student participants shared was of changing schools. Charles

described various types of international schools, Chinese schools and home schooling. Harold and James have attended other overseas schools before coming to TIS. Linda, Frank, John and Paul have come directly from their national schools.

my parents took me out of that school after a year and my mom home-schooled me for about a year (C1s)

Charles described moving from one system to another and frequently starting over (Ezra 2003, Kusuma-Powell 2004). In any one class, students will have very different histories regarding schooling patterns.

lots of people leave, like many of my friends have left my school, my class, and moved to other countries, also teachers do that (S1s)

The issues of transient life were most strongly identified when discussing friendship. This emerged as a strong domain with all the participants speaking about the importance they place on their friendships, both as genuine friendships and others that can best be described as ‘functional friendships’. Several aspects were identified and have been divided into sub-domains.

4.1.2 INITIAL FRIENDSHIPS

Recent research and literature show that expatriate students tend to be welcoming to newcomers and accepting to students from different nationalities (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). Relocating can be very traumatic for students arriving at a new country, a different education system and an unfamiliar culture (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Hess and Linderman 2002, Ezra 2003). They can be emotionally fragile, perhaps having reluctantly parted with lifelong friends and family either in their home country or in their previous school. The move may also result in family conflicts and negatively impact on academic achievement (Ezra 2003). In addition, many new international school students have to contend with a new school language of English (Murphy 2003). This is clearly the case with TIS students such as Frank, Linda, Harold, Paul and John.

In responding to this point, Roxanna described how quickly her daughter can make friends, but mostly talked about her own experiences such as on her arrival to an expatriate group in Indonesia she formed an initial friendship with a woman who selected her in a ‘friendship of convenience’ which ended in ‘divorce’ and in fact she met her ‘best friend’ only after some years overseas.

the very first friend I made, she kind of chose me, I was her chosen one [laughs], it was like we had to get divorced for me to make this other friend that I actually had more in common with and enjoyed being around more - but it was such a small community - and so I, it was really hard to distance myself from the other one, that was jealous [laughs] at 40 years old that I had a new friend (R3a)

The fact that Roxanna entered into such a friendship in the first place indicates she needed a friend so much so that she was prepared to put herself into an unpleasant situation where she was being controlled by another person. She described how the other woman would determine the films they would watch and places to shop or eat. While this account lacks plausibility as Roxanna does not appear to be the placid person she describes, these are events that took place several years ago and at a time when she was newly arrived overseas so she could have appeared to be much less confident than she is now. Her account does demonstrate the pressures on individuals living overseas and struggling to make sense of a new and strange world.

For TIS students, initial friendships, while not essential for survival, do greatly reduce stress and help them settle into their school life. Despite all the advances in providing Western style housing and facilities and English language services for the TIS expatriate community, people new to China will still struggle because, according to Brian, they find it “alien”. Often other foreigners will help parents with simple things such as where to buy Western products, how to make international phone calls or arrange transport or just to meet someone and be able to talk (Hess and Linderman 2002).

Student participants described a warm welcome to the school and the community. Frank spent some time discussing the importance of his initial friendships and how this gave him the confidence to develop his English. He suggested that initial friendships were somehow stronger and longer lasting than later friendships. When asked to respond to Frank’s claim, other participants were divided. Harold was very strong in arguing that it does not matter who arrives at the school, he would befriend them, echoing Pollock and Van Reken’s observations;

“Many international schools have a 30 percent turnover each year as families are transferred in and out. Students understand what it is like to be the “new kid in school” and typically extend themselves toward the newcomer.” (Pollock and Van Reken 1999: 230)

However, James responded that while TIS is a welcoming place, he could not accept such generalisations.

there are always people who aren't as social as others or don't make friends as easily or want to make friends as easily - I think it is a feature of international school but does not necessarily have to be (Ja3s)

James went on to discount the international school influence entirely;

I think this way of dealing with people and making friends is not just limited to the environment of the international school, I think it would depend on the persons themselves and in any other environment it could be the same (Ja3s)

Yet Diana ascribed the nature of friendships in such contexts as being a combination of the individual, the international scene and the transient nature of the setting and she considered if children were more able to establish relationships in international schools than in their home country;

maybe some of them are taking the opportunities as they come along to make friendships perhaps more quickly than they would have done if they were in a community back in their home country when you take friendships for granted to a certain extent (D3a)

The participants were in more agreement that there is a friendly and warm welcome on arrival at the school but later descriptions of cultural dissonance (section 6.3) implies that the reality is not as cosy as it first looks. Interestingly, the warm welcome also appears to be contradicted by the coping strategies which participants have developed in response to the frequent loss of friends and this will be taken up further in sections 4.1.4 and 4.1.5.

4.1.3 “LOTS OF MY FRIENDS JUST LEAVE”

Participants explained that friendships formed in the international school are not like friendships formed elsewhere. One factor is that “people are constantly coming and going” (C2s) so that at any time there are students who are new to the school, not just at the start of a semester, but throughout the year. Current students know what it is like to be new, so have empathy for new arrivals (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). As students arrive or leave, groupings in the school change and new friendships form.

it can be a little bit strange sometimes if you get to know someone and they already leave after a year so it's hard to build up long term relationships unless they are like - long distance relationships (C1s)

TIS students also identified having the same friends in and out of school, often living in the same compound and attending the same social events, which meant school

life and home life frequently overlapped. Despite such closeness, participants still described friendships as temporary. Two students who have been inseparable best friends for one or two years can suddenly find themselves separated and living in different parts of the world, as Susan explained;

lots of my friends just leave (S1s)

The use of the word 'just' emphasises both the unfairness Susan feels and immediacy of rapid turnover. It is this awareness of the temporary nature which leads participants to develop coping strategies, as shall be discussed below. The older students were more pragmatic, understanding the economic forces that determined their coming and going, and talked about maintaining friendships by keeping in touch with email. Paul responded to the quote "*lots of my friends just leave*" by agreeing that they do leave but it is not something he is concerned about. Instead he addressed the technological means by which he could keep in contact.

firstly 'lots of friends just leave', in Grade 10, a lot of people left and in Grade 11 some more left but we are still in contact today, you know [name] we still stay in contact today, we have the internet which is a good invention because you have instant messaging which keeps us together (P3s)

Diana responded that this was not a major concern for her.

I remember the first comment 'people are constantly coming and going' was not one of the things I feel most strongly about, I think that was my daughter, she felt it was an irksome thing, that it was not fair that her friends that she gets to know, that they come and go (D3a)

Susan was very passionate about this topic; the older participants seemed more accepting of this as a feature of their expatriate life. Susan has just left the Elementary section of the school and the friendships she has made over the years with younger students would not have been sustainable by using the internet or perhaps she was just too young to have the ability to sustain distance relationships, and so from Susan's experience when a friend leaves, they leave her life permanently. The older participants know that with internationally mobile people there is always the possibility of meeting up again providing they do keep in touch, which perhaps explains why Paul responds to this question by discussing technical details rather than providing an emotional response. The overall response to this point is that it is a reality of international school life and students learn to accept it and develop strategies to help them cope emotionally.

4.1.4 “KEEPING PEOPLE AT ARM’S LENGTH”

As well as the descriptions of the warm welcome to the school community are the apparently contradictory statements about keeping people at arm’s length. This grows out of the pain of repeatedly losing friends and so a common coping strategy is to keep an emotional distance (Pollock and Van Reken 1999).

my heart has been broken so many times (R3a)

Some participants talked about their reluctance to form new friendships, or at least not let them become too strong, and instead they appear to form friendships of convenience. This suggests that need is the driving factor as new friendships serve to replace the support systems one would expect in home countries e.g. family and friends (Hess and Linderman 2002, Poore 2005). These friendships can be characterised as being *functional*. The warm welcome is a reciprocal process, as new arrivals need and depend on existing members to help them with settling in and in turn they will later respond by helping others. Genuine friendships may grow out of these functional friendships, but not necessarily so. Interestingly, it was the participants with long term overseas experience (Diana, Charles, Susan and Roxanna) who had the strongest views on this.

not wanting too deep friendships when you know that someone is going to leave in two years and even if you tell yourself you are not doing that, probably sub-consciously we are doing that, you are keeping people at arm’s length (D2a)

you’re always coming into contact with new people, because people leave and new people come so maybe there is this kind of attitude to keep people at arm’s length a little bit, because you know that at some point they are going to leave again (C1s)

This strongly echoes the findings of Pollock and Van Reken;

“The cycle of frequent goodbyes inherent in a highly mobile lifestyle not only creates strains on specific relationships [...] but it can also lead to patterns of protecting themselves against the further pain of goodbyes that affect relationships throughout their entire lives.” (Pollock and Van Reken 1999: 131)

Diana explained how at first she would attempt to make genuine friendships with all the new foreigners, as did Roxanna and Harold, but after time she changed her attitude.

that comes out of a feeling at the beginning that you should pretty much reach out that hand to everyone but then of course as you get to know them you realise that not all of them are meant to be bosom buddies with you for ever and that just can’t

be, that's not realistic, so you do I think instigate strategies where you keep certain people, not all of them, but certain people at arm's length (D3a)

4.1.5 NEGOTIATED FRIENDSHIP BY TIME

One coping strategy Susan identified was to consider friendships by estimating the length of time a classmate shall be staying;

I get on well with most people in my class, usually the ones who have been here as long as I have been here, because they - I think I am going to live in China for quite a long time, so I usually get on better with people who I think are probably going to be here a longer time, I'm not afraid they are going to leave and you know I get pretty sad (S1s)

Obviously this is not always realistic; which her mother pointed out, because many students do not know how long they will be in China and it is unlikely that Susan would ignore a lively friendly girl she shared interests with, but it does demonstrate the difficulties of forming deep lasting friendships. Susan wants to avoid the hurt of losing friends.

In the third round of interviews participants were asked to respond to comments about developing such defensive strategies or other coping mechanisms and except for Harold, those who chose to discuss this agreed it is a feature of their school lives. They characterised it more as a subconscious action rather than deliberately excluding people.

the comment about that we keep people at arm's length could be true, if I think about it I don't exactly realise that I might be keeping people at arm's length - I might be doing (Ja3s)

However, there was not consensus amongst the participants as Harold strongly disagreed with this point;

I don't think that is true, because you really get used to people coming and going, coming and go, you want to grab them as a friend, seriously, it doesn't matter how long they stay, you want to make them as real friends before they leave and then you can keep in contact with them (H3s)

Harold's account seems to be more idealistic than plausible, likewise Susan's strategy of identifying length of time as a factor in making friends. A different approach comes from Diana who pointed out that each case is determined on its own merits;

I mean I have examples of friendships I had that lasted two months or maybe half a year, with people that I got on with, people I was really on the same wavelength with and I was quite aware at the beginning of that they were moving on, and all

the same invested quite a bit of energy into it (D3a)

Roxanna described a similar approach;

I do keep in touch with some of the friends that you make, permanent friends, because you are each other's family and for those chosen few they are always going to be your friends (R3a)

In keeping with Hammersley's (1992) and Pole and Morrison's (2003) advice to be critical and to represent the different realities of participants in a social scene, I asked Roxanna and Paul to respond to this point, as it seemed to be somewhat simplistic. Roxanna confirmed her earlier views; however, Paul argued that the opposite can also be true, as friendships in international circles can also be more lasting as people are prepared to be much more honest with each other from the start. He also argued that friendships back home can be just as superficial as those described by other participants and this should not be considered an international school only phenomenon. Paul's views about honesty appear to be more representative of the complexity of the social scene.

4.2 IDENTITY FORMATION AND NEGOTIATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

In describing their perspectives of the international school experience and its effect on culture, students discussed various aspects of their identity formation and adaptations in a multicultural environment (Mills 2001). During discussions and analysis of the topic of 'identity', several contradictions emerged. Participants provided accounts of life in the expatriate bubble yet referred to China as home. Some said they feel a stronger national identity when in China yet also described the homogenising effect of the TIS community as well as explaining how they feel like an outsider when returning to their home country (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). Participants explained the importance of intercultural understanding and how this affects them; however, they also reported a large divide between the Koreans and non-Koreans, and between the TIS expatriate community and the local Chinese community.

4.2.1 "WHERE ARE YOU FROM?"

For the TIS child, the asking of a simple question, 'where are you from?' can lead to some very convoluted life stories. Susan explained her confusion as a child.

when I was little, I used to tell people that I was from [place name in China] - I can remember them saying 'where are you from?' I thought they meant where I lived, so I used to answer [place name] because that was where I was born and where I grew up and where I go to school now (S1s)

James, John, Harold, Diana and Roxanna identified a strong sense of national identity, while for others their notion of identity lacks a dominant or 'anchoring' culture; Harold is Korean, James is German, but lacking a distinct primary socialisation (Byram 2003) into three cultures through his Scottish mother, German father and having lived for thirteen years in China, Charles just doesn't know.

it's just that - I am not really too sure which culture I belong to either, to a certain extent I belong to both and a certain extent to neither - and then with the whole explosion of Chinese culture and to all the cultures of the people that you meet - I would say that is a positive thing - but - I don't, it just makes me wonder about which culture I belong to (C2s)

Other participants described similar confusions and discussed peer and family pressures, self-identification and the phenomena of TCK's being in between cultures.

it's extremely hard for me to say that, firstly my parents are Chinese, they have come to Austria, I was born in Austria and - I think I would say I was Austrian as that is where I have lived most of my life and that is where I feel home, but also you have my Chinese background so it is conflicting, but I would go more for Austria just because I feel more at home there (P3s)

I think they [children] both are attached to different parts of each culture and I don't, we talk about it as a family and I don't think they miss it as such but they are quite aware that they don't belong anywhere, that they have to build what they are and what they want each time anew and I don't think it has harmed them from what I can see (B4a)

I sort of find that depending on where I am, it also affects the ways I act in a certain way, even though there is nowhere that I specifically call my home (C4s)

two years ago there was [student], he had Korean and German parents but you couldn't see anything at all that was Korean on him, you mostly saw him mainly from America and not Korean at all and he didn't even speak Korean and so I think there is this where you try to eliminate one culture to make it easier between the differences (P4s)

I have a friend, his mother is from Denmark, his father is from Taiwan, he had to come to Vietnam to study and he was speaking four or five different languages and it was really beneficial to him but I don't know what his identity is in that case, he doesn't even know where he comes from, he is like "am I Danish or Taiwanese?" it is just difficult for kids with multiple nationality (H3s)

The difficulties of having a ‘*multiple nationality*’ and ‘a sense of displacement’ or ‘not belonging’ (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Ezra 2003, Fail *et al.* 2004 and Zilber 2004) have been established in section 2.1, but perhaps what has not been made clear is how national identities are reinforced by the international school’s multicultural environment, and this is explored in the next section.

4.2.2 “I FEEL MORE GERMAN HERE”

A noticeable incongruity was identified and confirmed by James, Diana, Paul, Harold and John as they described how they and other TIS students who already have a clearly defined nationality felt a stronger national identity while attending the international school, at the same time as they were interacting with various other cultures. There are two explanations for this apparent contradiction; one being that the enhanced national identities are constructs in response to challenges from the multicultural international school environment, the other being that such outcomes as reinforced ethnic identities are a natural part of intercultural exchanges, negotiation and conflict because people become more aware of their own national identity when they can compare it (Byram 2003).

if there is a handful of German people here in a country where there is not many German people, you realise more what it actually means where you come from because when you are back home in Germany it’s everyday things, you in China, things that seem everyday things in Germany, that’s part of your culture, where you come from, you take it for granted (Ja4s)

In the TIS multicultural environment, national identity appears to confirm individual identity and/or membership of groups and it allow intercultural exchanges, as described by James and Diana; they draw on the importance of being able to explain what they say, believe, think or do in their own culture which shows the need for individuals to negotiate and establish their self-identity in relation to those around them, as social identities are social constructs created by the individual and their positions in group interactions (Byram 2003).

“The empirical work in social identity theory shows how individuals can be influenced by groups and their individuality, their personal identity, dominated by their group identity; how individuals respond to other individuals in terms of such categorisation; how this leads to comparison and competition which is, in turn, a basis for self-esteem – when a person’s group is successful in competition with others, the person’s self-esteem is increased.” Byram (2003: 51)

Such competition between groups is clearly evident in TIS (see section 6.3) Participants also explained that the strengthening of their national identities is not to the exclusion of other cultures or identities (Pollmann 2007).

I'm Scottish through and through but not so much that I will not let in other cultural influences (D2a)

I am German, that's where I was born and I lived there for a long time, but at our age I don't think it is vital to have to say, or to have to identify with one country and I don't think I ever can, I am not 100% German because I am not like most of the Germans I know but I don't think that is such a big problem, I personally don't find it such a big problem (Ja4s)

While national identities appear to be reinforced for those who have a clearly defined national identity, Charles and Paul discussed selecting from a choice of nationalities, thus demonstrating how individuals may exercise “self ascription” (Byram 2003) in that they choose the nationality or culture they most want to align to.

I mean I do have a lot of friends in Germany that I know and stuff, but a lot of them I would say are not very typically German (laughs) erm - I think I can identify a lot more with my Scottish family - they are a lot more outgoing and friendly (C1s)

The intercultural exchanges enable understanding and the increased national identity is a product of the heightened awareness of one's own culture. These identities are influenced by struggles within and between cultural groups; participants considered the extent to which decisions about cultural identity are influenced by group dynamics and “other ascription” (Byram 2003).

I feel like I have to show I am Korean so you feel more pressure, you think you have to show it more clearly (H3s)

I am more Korean when I am in a foreign country because if I was in Korea I wouldn't wear those formal Korean traditional clothes at all but because I am in international school I go there and I am in a foreign country and I do that (H3s)

National identity may have added significance as it determines both the individuality and the group allegiance of the international school child in a multicultural context. Participants reported that ideas or feelings of enhanced national identity did not occur to them back in their home country and indeed they seem to evaporate on their return home, as participants reported feeling like outsiders (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Fail *et al.* 2004) thus suggesting such identities are constructs that exist in

the multicultural context only. In discussing the management of his ethnic identity in the TIS multicultural environment, James revealed his perceived notions of a national identity, while at the same time he demonstrated his awareness of his own and other cultures.

I'd say I feel more German here because - erm - because you don't realise the German aspect of your own personal culture if you, when you are in Germany because everybody there is German and they all do the German things and when you are here - it's - I don't know, here you can explain to people if you are talking to people about your home country's cultural aspects (Jals)

you begin to see your own country differently, see yourself differently (D1a)

In learning about other cultures, students learn more about their own (Byram 2003), so being able to compare two cultures appears to have allowed James to develop a deeper understanding of his own national and international identities. The exchange and communication allows cultural enrichment as students discover other cultures and can have a comparative understanding of their own culture; the more an individual has experiences of other cultures the more they can understand and critically analyse or assess their own culture and be aware of differences of cultures or their social identities; and by doing so both James and Diana demonstrate “*savoir s'engager*” (Byram 2003).

4.2.3 DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL IDENTITY

In apparent contradiction to the previous section, participants reported that attending TIS has a homogenising effect due to the mixing of cultures within the compound community and international school, the result of which appears to be the forming of an international culture, or at least a TIS community or school culture.

it's actually the benefit in terms of language because now we are living in the world where you can communicate with each other so knowing a lot of languages it is obviously a benefit for you living in a society and to get a job, but for us we are actually spending our teenage time in China at an international school and that changes our ways of thinking (L4s)

Harold, Charles and Brian also stressed the importance of the international school in influencing cultural identity due to life in the island-like compound.

I think our children are very much influenced by the international school, that's their main area of living except for the family, the family, my wife and I and what we have here in the house is a mixture of different European and American influences (B1a)

you meet so many people from different cultures, you make friends and you have a direct contact with them and then you are unconsciously influenced by how they talk, how they think about the thing, so I think because you are at an international school you are definitely influenced by it (H3s)

it is sort of like a sub-culture I am used to which is just like a small group of international expats I guess, who are really part of this culture inside another culture - it's a little bit hard to describe - we are sort of creating - it's like we are bringing our culture over here, it changes a lot and brings other elements into it (C1s)

Participants explained that as people enter and stay in the international school they change; their range of values and beliefs will alter during the time spent in the school's multicultural environment due to the mixing of culture and cultural identities, or "cultural blending" as students display characteristics from their own culture and from the various other cultures they come into contact with (Astill and Keeves 1999, Poore 2005).

I would say it is quite a mixed thing - I don't know, I mean culture is not just books you're reading or music you hear - it's something of our own very much because I mean we threw things together from different places (B1a)

I find myself explaining to people sometimes this is what we do in Germany for example at Christmas, at certain holidays at certain festivals, certain times of year - I don't know - it's hard to say (J1s)

Charles explained that some children struggle in adopting the "blended culture" of the international school (Astill and Keeves 1999, Poore 2005) as the homogenising effect, as evidenced by descriptions of participants returning to their home countries, can lead to painful internal conflicts (Pollock and Van Reken 1999), especially if their home culture is at variance with the TIS school culture, such as John (see section 5.4) who describes how on his visits home to Korea he receives very negative treatment from his peers (Allan 2002 and 2003, Drake 2004, Poore 2005).

It would appear that for participants such as Peter, Diana, Linda, Harold and James, it is quite practical to have both a national and an international identity and they can move smoothly between them.

4.2.4 "A CHANGING BEAST" AND A "MISHMASH"

The discussions of national and international identities ought to emphasise how

social identities metamorphose in response to the 'nexus' of numerous individual, interpersonal and group interactions in the TIS multicultural international context (Mills 2001, Byram 2003, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Diana characterised identity as a changing phenomenon, being responsive to the ever shifting circumstances of the TIS multicultural setting.

it's a changing beast several times everyday and sometimes several times within the one day (D2a)

Diana's description of her negotiations in terms of singular and plural interactions reinforces Byram's (2003) and Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) explanations of the dynamic nature of such negotiations in determining identities.

"In sum, we view *identities* as social, discursive, and narrative options offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to which individuals and groups of individuals appeal in an attempt to self-name, to self-characterize, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives." (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 19, their emphasis)

it does, definitely, definitely, even down to the tone of my voice and the gestures I use because I do subconsciously try to adapt to that cultural group that I am with at that time and then of course interestingly if you transfer that to a situation where you are in, like say at [TIS] you are in a room full of people from all different countries, I don't know what it must look like to the outside, a real mishmash of - I don't know what (D2a)

Each adaptation allows Diana and others to find a common ground for communicating and interacting; she is very clear how she has to adapt her mannerisms and language(s) to various situations depending on who she is with at the time and how such actions have impacted on her own identity to the extent that some adopted behaviours have become natural. Diana explained the partial transformation of some of her perspectives and attitudes.

you know Germans are very direct speaking and you can lay something on the line to them and they are absolutely not insulted, but not fellow Brits I often notice, and I've become very direct after being married to a German for so many years and when I go back to Scotland I know I have to tone it down quite a bit (D3a)

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) emphasise the fluid nature of identities and warn that cultures can't be assumed to be stable. This is especially relevant in the ever-changing 'nexus' of the TIS community as the numerous interpersonal and inter-group interactions lead to the negotiation of social identities as found in Diana's description of

the ever-changing environment. Other participants concurred.

'a changing beast' that's a good thought, I think that's very true, like when you speak to one group of people, it's a totally different conversation when you are talking to people from your own home country, but all in the course of one day, and - yeah that's very true because if I am talking to a German person there are certain aspects of German culture they can relate to which I don't have to explain (Ja3s)

I think it's important to see that you are only a part of it and these things are shifting all the time, that's how I see it, that you are, in certain times of life, you have certain people who you are living with from different areas, from different cultures, you take up things, beliefs and - ethics, some habits and stuff like that which make up the culture of the family (B1a)

4.3 INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS

Participants described their interactions with people from numerous nationalities and cultures and the enriching experience this provides. The TIS community hails from various countries which when considered in the context of being in China, means there are numerous daily interactions requiring behaviour and language modifications (Mills 2001, Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). Participants also described the interactions with the local Chinese community with some reporting very positive experiences, though others recounted conflicts and negative attitudes that they have witnessed.

4.3.1 COMPOUND LIFE

it is like an island, you are very much in your own world (B1a)

A study of a school such as TIS does not end at the school gates as students, parents and teachers live in close social proximity. TIS students mostly live in compounds provided to attract foreign families to the region by making their stay as comfortable as possible. Usually rents and utility bills are paid by the parents' employers. These compounds have full security with guards, fences, dogs and CCTV. In the compound, daily contact with Chinese people will most likely be with drivers, maids and waitresses.

Most TIS families have maids known as Ayi (auntie) who cook, clean and look after children and many have full-time drivers too. The compounds have numerous workers constantly cleaning, gardening and fixing. Houses and apartments have all the 21st century fittings including modern kitchens, satellite televisions and internet. The compound management speak English (or Korean for the one compound where the

Korean families mostly live). The clubhouses have gyms, restaurants, play areas, bars, shops, English speaking staff and some also have swimming pools, tennis and squash courts. In the city are international supermarkets which stock many international products such as wines, cheeses and tinned goods with items clearly labelled in English. Shopping can also be ordered by email and delivered to the door.

every year we have new people coming to our company and the demands are getting higher and higher that the people bring to this country, and it's getting more and more difficult to get people to come over and funnily enough from our perspective living here is much easier than it was ten years ago, I mean just from the perspective of what is materially available, when we arrived in '94 you couldn't get milk neither fresh nor UHT and there were no Western restaurants and all these kinds of things did not exist, but now you have basically 90% of the Western lifestyle at your fingertips at a very reasonable price, most people can go out everyday which they could never afford in their country (B4a)

Many members of the school's expatriate community live in a separate 'world' to the host country in what Poore (2005) describes as "gilded ghettos". The temporary situation for many families combined with not knowing how long they will be staying, short term notice to leave, fleeting friendships as other families leave, plus the difficulties of life outside of the expatriate bubble, whether imagined or real, limits interactions with the host country.

these people are afraid because the country is so different, so alien (B4a)

they have left their home for the first time and feel more at home with people from their country, they find it simply easier to talk to people who have had the same experience and find it easier to have a conversation with people who can relate back to the same things in their childhood (C2s)

In Chapter 7 I shall discuss the 'bubble effect' which draws on the idea that behaviours and attitudes are created or reinforced by attending the international school and living in the compound environment. I asked the participants to respond to this emerging hypothesis (Spradley 1979) and they all agreed that it was a key characteristic of the TIS community living in compounds.

I think that when I was small and living here in this kind of bubble that you have described, because we lived in a very large compound and funnily enough the school was inside the compound so during the week there was no need to go out of the compound at all [laughs] so I guess you could call this an extreme example of the bubble effect (C4s)

I think in a way it does isolate them from the Chinese community, maybe they live very close to but are separated from them which you probably expect from most

expatriate communities - but in a way it might be kind of sad because you see people who have lived here for four or five years and they have really never come outside of this bubble, ok, the first thing is they don't need to, they aren't forced to anyway because they have all the facilities that they need, they don't need to learn the language because there is always somebody ready to interpret and in their job they might not be required to know any Chinese (C4s)

once people are securely ensconced in their compounds and with all the security blankets of everyday life then - the bubble is complete (D4)

OK, the bubble effect, I think there is definitely something and if you deny it then you are trying- you are very much eluding yourself (B4a)

I actually agree with your idea of bubble - I think this is a good opportunity to experience China or the other Western style of life but most Korean students do not want to involve in China culture and China people altogether (M4a)

the more privileges you have available, the more picky people get - this is something that makes me mad when I am discussing what privileges we are going to pay and what we are not (B4a)

While Brian is unhappy about many of his colleagues and expatriates at TIS missing out on the opportunity to experience Chinese culture and develop Mandarin, he is clear that he is more concerned with having his foreign workers able to function with the minimum of difficulties and anxieties. He explains that the pressures from market-driven companies for employees to perform in the role for which they have been brought to China is more important than developing language or experiencing culture. Such pressures reinforce the isolation from the host country's language and culture with many TIS expatriates becoming 'prisoners in the palace' inside their 'gilded jails' (Hess and Linderman 2002, Poore 2005).

in China for most foreigners who live here the bubble is a necessary thing to work to survive (B4a)

so whether you want it or not you are pressed into a bubble (B4a)

The extent of such isolation was most effectively illustrated by Paul, who despite being from a Chinese family is also secluded within the compound.

I think if you bring up children in the bubble they will have - feel less need to adapt to Chinese culture, they will feel more to - preserve or show European or other country identity rather than showing they actually came from China - and I also, I think it gives them a bad view of China because it separates them from China so they probably have, when they come back to their home country and people ask them 'how is China?' and they say 'fine' but then they can't say

anything else because they have never actually been to real China so they never know, so probably Discovery Channel can tell them more about China than if they go outside and look (P4s)

4.3.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGES

Life at the international schools can provide an exciting opportunity for international students to meet many different nationalities. Hayden *et al.* (2000), Hayden *et al.* (2003) and Hinrichs (2003) discuss the difficulties of identifying and measuring internationalism in international schools, yet from the outset participants were quick to emphasise the importance of intercultural understanding and explain how it is a key feature of their international school experiences. John explained that attending TIS was a good opportunity to ‘*get used to*’ foreigners. James described the environment helping to open him up to other cultures, allowing him to embrace the host culture and to understand ‘*clichés*’ or stereotypes.

I don't know, reducing cultural prejudices I guess, reducing clichés, things you think, you know Germans are always on time and then you meet a couple of Germans and they are always late - and - ok actually it is not just the little bits of language you learn, for example we are around a lot of Koreans and before I came here I never tried Korean food and just because there are 40% Korean at the school I got to experience what Korean food tastes like and that's pretty cool (J1s)

Evidence of intercultural behaviours was found in the participants’ descriptions of interactions. For example Diana explained how she listens to Korean students’ (friends of her son) concerns and she provides an opportunity for them to talk with an adult other than a teacher or parent, while Paul empathised with the struggles of his Korean classmates. James described his attempts to view different nationalities without bias and Linda explained the advantages of attending TIS so she could meet students from other nationalities.

here we have students from different cultures and countries and I think it is better if we work together because we get to understand much more and then we get to communicate (L1s)

I have also been to more schools than that which have not been international schools and personally I've liked the international school environment better and I guess for one it does open - one up towards other cultures and nationalities and helps people to understand other people (J1s)

Roxanna describes her desire to live overseas and relate to different cultures. Her

initial reasons for international life were her sense of adventure and a desire to learn about other cultures.

my family is from a farming community in [place name in USA] and they really don't understand why in the world [laugh] I would want to live overseas but ever since I was a little kid I always wanted to meet people from different places and to understand what they did and how they lived and how they talked, so it's always been something I was very interested in, not just the people in China but to see how the, what do they do at Christmas time? what do the people from Germany do on Easter? it's just fun for me to learn all those things (R1a)

The school community is characterised as a group by the mixing of various nationalities and cultures and Diana used the metaphor “a multi-coloured kind of peacock mentality” to describe her daily interactions with people from numerous cultures and the local community. On a typical day, she reports interacting with Ayis, drivers, Chinese colleagues, staff in shops and restaurants, mothers and teachers from numerous countries and her German husband. Each interaction requires adaptations on her part.

so you take on a multi-coloured kind of peacock mentality in those situations yes, so it's very changing and very mixed for me and I think that's ok, I feel comfortable with that (D2a)

She later describes how it is more than language adaptation but changing her ‘way of being’ as she manages multiple negotiations in a multicultural context.

the ‘multicoloured peacock type of mentality’ comment, yeah I think I did make a comment along those lines but it was related not just to language but it was about cultural adaptation - that it was almost sometimes hypocritical but it is what I do anyway, naturally to change your way of being almost, not just your language but your way of being depending on who is the recipient, depending on who you are interacting with, it seems quite natural (D3a)

Diana’s peacock metaphor matches Hill’s description of intercultural understanding stemming from a positive attitude and a welcoming manner and this can be applied to the numerous interactions within the expatriate community that occur on a daily basis.

“Knowledge about the historical, social, political, economic, religious and anthropological influences that shape a culture can lead to an appreciation of that culture but the adoption of a positive attitude towards others does not stem from knowledge alone; it is an attitudinal reflex. From the moment a student adopts a welcoming attitude towards others, the intent of intercultural understanding has been broached.” (Hill 2006: 12)

Globally mobile children have increased world-views with first hand experiences



and interactions with bearers of various cultures (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). They are able to observe and interact with different cultures and can develop strong cultural links (Ezra 2003). This can happen subconsciously or, as Hill (2006) describes, through deliberate and intended interactions leading to an understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

it's different to when you are speaking to someone who is actually from that country, for example, in normal conversation there are certain, I don't know, references you make and talking to my mum I would talk about the same thing differently because I can make German references that she would understand whereas if I was talking to someone from Korea I would have to speak about different things, I would make different references to explain the same thing (Ja3s)

Linda and James explained how members of the same cultural community have a shared understanding of cultural references e.g. television shows, books or jokes, and while the task of explaining the references to members of other cultures can be an enriching experience, it can also, depending on the context, prove futile as descriptions may not be able to substitute first hand knowledge.

4.3.3 ACCESSING THE HOST CULTURE

As a parent Brian wants his children to interact with the local Chinese but does not wish to force them;

I guess most kids only get a one-sided idea about the country and the people, I mean this kind of living is not helpful for creating any kind of understanding about the country for the children, we have Chinese friends but it is limited, there is not much access for other children to the society, to be honest we didn't force it because if it is not natural then we should not force it (B4a)

Harold was more animated in his response, and he believes TIS students should be making much more effort to fully interact with the Chinese language and culture;

I still don't think they are using the full advantage of living in China, it is like the international school in New York visiting Chinatown, it is nothing more than that to me, they should have more advantage because they are living in China, they should have used it very wisely but they are not doing it, so all of the kids that have lived here for four or five years and they have no Chinese and that is shocking, that's a shame and I think it's more than the school, it is the individual's will to learn Chinese and have more contact with the local people (H4s)

Yet despite such condemnation he admits that he too is in this position;

if you are really trying hard to learn the languages you should make an effort to

contact the local people but at this point I did not have any contact with the local people (H3s)

The division was confirmed by all the participants.

most people stay here for a short time, three or four years for them is not - they - they see China from the - from outside, I mean they, when they took their trips on the weekend it's when they meet China (B4a)

I suppose that in the community of the school - international students - it would be quite close knit as well - because they would not necessarily socialise that much with the people from the country where they are staying but would rather stay together with the people from the school, people from the same nationality (C1s)

Paul's parents are Chinese, but he too has no desire to interact.

I speak Chinese but I don't feel the need to go anywhere else because you don't have other people you want to communicate with and - most of the time you also think it is annoying because there are so many people there and you just want to stay by yourself - so most of the time you just go from one friend to another friend and the communication with the Chinese is mainly with the taxi driver (P4s)

Western participants described being stared at by local Chinese. Interactions are usually friendly and the result of natural curiosity, often including being pointed at, laughter and shouts of 'foreigner' although 'Lao Wai' translates as old/respected outsider so the phrase is harmless (compared to 'big nose') but it is the context of its usage which causes some TIS expatriates to report feeling uneasy when outside of their compounds. Susan describes such an encounter.

everybody stares at me like I am an alien or something (S1s)

Susan is conscious that she looks different and will be pointed at and she is negative about this public attention. Susan's sense of isolation is reinforced by her accounts of being brought up where she is the target for attention because of her "distinct differences" (Pollock and Van Reken 1999).

like when I am in the street, everyone says 'look there is a foreigner' and when I was little they used to come to me and say 'xiao yang wawa' which means cute little doll, it was so embarrassing (S1s)

This is common as Diana reports;

there is a really nice word in German which means to be on a presentation plate or a cake plate, you know one of those high cake plates, so that's what the Germans often say here, 'oh God, you really feel as if you are on a cake plate' because the Chinese are always staring at you (D4a)

But unlike Susan, Diana sees the funny side of such interactions.

just a simple thing like going through the supermarket and having everyone look into your shopping basket and actually taking the stuff out and examining it (D4a)

The participants talked about certain groups and individuals not making any attempts to have friendships or relationships with the Chinese, or being hostile towards the local community.

I think in a small school here - the sort of school community is fairly isolated maybe from students outside of the school because, in this case TIS is the only foreign school in [place name] and in my experience most of the students here have very little to do with Chinese students from other schools (C2s)

Brian explained the practicalities;

I think time is definitely a factor, first of all you spent four years here maximum and then the kids are at school for most of the time and on the vacation they are taken home for most of the time, so the real exposure to China is the period of time between the compound and the school mostly, and there is no overlapping free time between when Chinese kids go to school and our kids so even if you try to force some kind of relationship at that age it is basically impossible (B4a)

The lack of interaction is not a TIS-only phenomenon (Poore 2005, MacDonald 2006) and Harold recounted how his time in an international school community in Vietnam was the same.

when I am in China I think I should have more contact with the local people, when I was in Vietnam I was totally isolated, well not totally but didn't really have any contact with the local people - because even though I learnt Vietnamese I had really zero contact, I think if I didn't have my tutor I don't think I would have had any contact with the local Vietnamese people (H4s)

As a Korean teenager living in China, John's experience is noticeably different to Western foreigners and much of what John says has negative undertones, with the comment about house buying suggesting he is repeating comments from home.

Chinese people, it is very difficult - and they can trick us because I am foreigner to China - for example houses, like, Chinese people buy them cheaper than we buy, it's very unfair I think, also because we don't know the way to home or something, so we don't - like, for example the taxi or something, they can trick us (Jo1s)

John goes on to say;

sometimes they swear at us because we are Korean or something - just ignore us, they don't treat us like human sometimes (Jo1s)

Yet as Marlin describes, the cultures are very different and the young Koreans have little interest in Chinese culture;

the main thing is Korean culture and Chinese culture is different, the main difference is development level - compare with Chinese China, Korea is a little bit developed advanced country - actually we - our Korean student already adapt to Korean advanced culture, their music, their dance and their ideas - their culture is totally different to Chinese, they didn't find any interest in current Chinese culture so firstly they are not interested in Chinese culture (M4a)

Implicit in Marlin's comments is the attitude of the Korean community to the Chinese; the lack of interest in things Chinese may reinforce the cultural gap and negative attitudes towards the host country.

James connects the importance of intercultural interactions to his future career and the ability to move to different countries. He demonstrates many of the attributes of internationalism which the school and IBO are keen to promote, indicating that both action and commitment is needed to embrace other cultures. He also revealed that there is a degree of 'ignoring or avoiding' the Chinese culture evident amongst the TIS community. James appears to be an exception as he is the only student participant who is actively involved in the Chinese community. He reported being genuinely interested in learning Chinese and studying more about the Chinese people and culture, and has decided to postpone university in Germany for a year so he can study Mandarin fulltime at a Chinese university. James was very strongly spoken in his desire to 'embrace the culture of your host country' regardless of whether one is staying for one or two years or longer.

one shouldn't ignore the people, when they are talking to you, you might not understand but you shouldn't be ignoring or avoiding the culture of the host country which in this case is China because I think that is probably one of the most important aspects of moving to another country and living there for a year or two, however long, because that is a huge experience in life and if you embrace the culture of your host country it - that is a life lesson and I think it prepares you pretty well for example if you move on to another country which wasn't your home (Jals)

4.3.4 ADDITIONAL DIFFICULTIES FOR KOREANS

For the TIS Korean children, the 'distinct differences' (Pollock and Van Reken 1999) are less apparent and to some extent their experiences mirror Bell's (1997) accounts of "hidden immigrants" which applies to TCKs returning to America to describe their sense of dislocation while appearing to casual observers to be in their home country

yet having grown up overseas they have a sense of not belonging. I apply Bell's term in a different way here as Korean participants explained how they can be treated by the local population; while occidentals are clearly identifiable as foreigners, Koreans can be mistaken for Chinese and so become 'hidden immigrants', with Eileen and John reporting some negative and aggressive encounters.

I like the Chinese culture, but sometime very difficult because if they are Korean some Chinese are quite rude because I am just like a Chinese but I can't speak that much Chinese and they say 'you're Chinese, how come you can't speak Chinese?' I say I am not Chinese I am Korean, they can't understand, maybe you look like a Westerner, they can accept that you can't speak Chinese but to me they are very rude, I am just like a Chinese but I can't speak Chinese, they are very - rude for me and sometimes their face very bad (E1a)

For the Korean students, the sense of isolationism is pronounced, because they are separate both as being foreigners living in a compound in China but also lack the opportunities to interact with other nationalities from the expatriate community due to the Korean community mostly living in a compound separate to the ones where the Westerners live, and to the Korean versus non-Korean division within TIS (see section 6.3). Korean language and culture is reinforced within the compound, to the extent that John claims there is no difference between Korea and China.

living in [place name] is almost like - in this place, I think - there is no difference with - culture, like - and Korea - in this place and Korea - because as I said, many Koreans so - I think there is nothing different between Korea and here (Jo1s)

4.3.5 THE AYI MENTALITY

Diana described examples of TIS children and parents treating Chinese adults with contempt and disrespect. She specifically referred to instances involving maids and drivers.

The hiring of household help is common in Asia and for expatriates it is one of the advantages of living in certain postings. Just as many of the TIS community would not be able to send their children to US\$20,000-a-year private schools in their home country, so too it is unlikely they would have full time servants. Hess and Linderman (2002) report that in numerous countries due to the disproportionate wealth of expatriates and the poverty of household help there are many workers desperate for such positions. In China there is an abundance of labour. Expatriates tend to pay Ayis more than Chinese families and the average daily salary of between ¥50 to 100RMB (£4 to £8) is considered

a good wage.

For most expatriates having household help is a bonus and allows them freedom from the daily chores of cleaning, cooking, shopping, paying bills and collecting children from school. Roxanna, Eileen and Diana talked about their Ayis and how they treat them with respect, have become friends and how for most expatriates this is their main interaction with the local community.

usually I am just a housewife and I met the cleaning lady, the maid and that's a long time Chinese, only one Chinese I can meet a long time (E1a)

I was raised on a farm and my mom passed away when I was real little and I had to do the dishes and clean the house and take care of everything, at the time I was 14, I was like the mom of the house, so me having a maid and a cook now I could be - very unthankful but I never go a day without saying thank you to them because I am very, I think I am more appreciative and if they don't clean the house exactly the way I would do it I don't worry about that because I am not cleaning it, it's not totally dirty, so I am very appreciative for my lifestyle (R1a)

Ayi means auntie and for many families this is how they are viewed and emotional ties can be established, especially if the Ayi is looking after young children. However participants also described some of the negative behaviours they have witnessed as Diana explained when discussing the attitude of some of the TIS expatriates;

I have noticed some sad examples that go into the direction of racism where Ayis are treated with not very much respect and the same with drivers, interestingly enough although this is quite a transient experience for most of us, it can be that we just have these luxuries that come with the package for two or three years, you never had an Ayi or driver before and may never do again so this attitude seems to come out of it, all the more reason to use it for all we can get out of it for the two or three years that we are here (D3a)

Poore (2005) echoes Diana's description when he writes about the 'Didi mentality' of expatriate children in Sri Lanka which seems to describe perfectly the 'Ayi mentality' in the TIS students. At the end of the school day the TIS elementary students will be met by an army of Ayis and drivers (far outnumbering the parents who come to collect children) and for many children the first thing they do is give their school bags to the maid or driver to carry. Young children can misbehave or demand sweets from Ayis who will be too worried for their jobs to tell parents because for most this is illegal work paid in cash with no taxes or records, so there is no recourse to the law for unfair dismissal. Poore (2005) warns of the danger such power relationships have in reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices. It can be suggested that these roles actually denigrate Chinese

in the eyes of privileged expatriate children leading to the ‘Ayi mentality’, with children developing the attitude of having servants to boss around and expecting them to do their tidying and washing, and in return not treating them with much respect.

Having an Ayi allows for appropriate and reasonable living where perhaps shopping or paying bills is not a straightforward process and Hess and Linderman (2002) argue it is an important social service for expatriates to employ Ayis and provide them and their family with an income in areas of high unemployment. Out of this can grow the strong friendships that Diana’s family have established over the years. Therefore, it is not having an Ayi that leads to the Ayi mentality but rather how she is treated. Diana warns, as do Hess and Linderman (2002) and Poore (2005), that it is important for parents to model good social and intercultural behaviours.

4.3.6 NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Non-Korean participants described being physically and psychologically different from the local Chinese and how these “distinct differences” have a bearing on their interactions with the dominant local culture (Pollock and Van Reken 1999).

if you want to include ourselves in the Chinese society, it would not be possible given by the fact we look different, I mean we are a different race (B4a)

There were accounts of various interactions with local people and some participants (Diana’s family) reported having close Chinese friends. Others talked about their interest in learning more about China and wishing to speak Chinese, with some actively taking the opportunity to do so. Participants explained the opportunities for experiencing Chinese culture, yet the social scene they described is one of separation and isolation with few genuine attempts to relate to the host country. While all participants stressed that this was not suggested to be true for everyone, they did confirm they were describing a significant number of the TIS expatriate population.

The participants were very positive about the Chinese people and culture, but they reported that they had witnessed negative behaviours and attitudes from TIS students towards the local community. Charles, Diana, Brian and James explained they have heard many such comments.

from the time I have been here I have heard - I’ve heard many - this is stupid but - crude and dumb comments about, for example there is a big compound in the city where mostly Western people live in the houses inside the compound and I heard a person say that ‘you know the compound is really nice because I am around Western people and European people all the time but once I go out of the

compound it is so Chinese because there is Chinese people, people are talking in Chinese, there is, I don't know, the smells of Chinese food', they don't even like the smell of China - and - erm - and what is sad is they don't even try (Jals)

I hear from one of my German managers that the Chinese are this and that, they are too slow, it's true there are differences you know but it is difficult to put a value on them, are they good or bad? but it doesn't really matter because this is what you have and you have to work with it (B4a)

Charles uses the phrase “bordering on racism” to describe TIS students not wanting to interact with Chinese. Diana described some parents as being racist and attributes this to the short-term mentalities they develop.

I have always seen the racist extent that tends to be, from what I have observed, mixed in with the feeling that 'I'm coming here on the two or three year contract, I am going to make lots of money and then I am going to get out of here and I am just going to bite the bullet and get through it as best as I can,' I've not normally seen them as very happy experiences in general because it's naive to think that you can sequester yourself off and live in luxury in your compound or whatever, because you will be confronted with it, it's unavoidable (D3a)

The effect of living in the isolated, expatriate community is seen to be another key factor, with Charles discussing how attitudes form due to the compounds' island-like existence.

I guess that some people would be, because they are isolated from the Chinese people from the beginning - then it kind of kills the interest - or the initiative to actively want to go and mingle with Chinese people or to make friends, to experience Chinese culture (C4s)

The use of the word racism has strong connotations and perhaps is incorrectly used here. The expatriates described here are only in China to work and while some do want to learn the language and about the culture, that is not their reason for being here. Yet this runs contrary to what the international school is trying to achieve. Are children seeing adults on whom they should model their behaviours and attitudes reinforcing the gap between the expatriates and Chinese? If so, the ideas of internationalism being espoused by the school are not being inculcated into members of the school community.

I know some people who don't want to hang around with Chinese students for reasons I guess bordering on racism, yeah - I mean I don't know, I can't really comment too much on the international community in the way of adults but I think that many of them also prefer to socialise inside the international community, that it stays to itself to a large extent, especially from the teachers and so that I know (C2s)

Even more damning is the comment that it is especially the teachers who model this type of behaviour. Why the teachers? Perhaps because they are more visible to students than other expatriate adults or because it is true, the teachers as a group tend to socialise together exclusively.

Poore (2005) warns of the apparent contradiction that the international school experience may be providing children with the opposite outcome to that intended by the school and the IBO.

“I often wonder how many of our students return home from their lives overseas, contrary to the best intentions of our schools, having adopted attitudes of elitism, superiority and cultural chauvinism? How many have had racial stereotypes reinforced rather than reversed?” (Poore 2005: 358)

What is causing such attitudes? Poore (2005) believes the “gilded ghettos” where students live are a key factor.

4.3.7 “I THINK CHINA IS HOME NOW”

Some of the students and their parents described China as their home. Having lived in China since 1994 it is reasonable for Diana and her family to describe China as home.

I feel I belong in China (S1s)

I do see China as my home (D4a)

The notion of belonging is intriguing because accounts of other participants clearly indicate that they do not belong in China, are living temporary lives in privileged compounds isolated from the reality of China, yet they also describe China as home.

I think China is home now, because in Italy I don't have any friends my age, now that [name] my brother is in Italy for two years, I spend time with his friends, but I don't have any more friends from my class basically, I feel that China is my home (F1s)

the first time, the first one and two years is very difficult and I say I want to go to Korea or England but now after five years I can, it just feels like my home and I come back to Korea I feel like a foreigner but here it feels like my home (E1a)

wherever we are we try to stay together as a family for sure, and make it our home, so that's not odd, because I do talk about going home to the US, but in the US I talk about going home to China (R3a)

In referring to China as their home rather than as a temporary stopover the participants give added significance to their time here. In response to this point, James explained that he is referring to China now but he is fully aware that this can quickly change.

'I think China is home now' that's true, I think if you were moving round in cycles of one, two or three years I'd say your home is wherever you are at the moment, where your school is, where your house is, wherever you are based at the moment so for me China is home for the moment (Ja3s)

Given the descriptions of compound life, referring to China as home appears to be somewhat contradictory. While such statements may seem ironic following on from the discussion of compound life, they do make sense if considered in the context of individuals describing their lives entirely within the compound.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter shows that in a highly transient international school setting with various cultures mixing, there are opportunities for cultural and language enrichment, but there are also stresses which can result in negative behaviours and conflict within the community. Participants identified key features of their lives in an 'island-like' expatriate community in China; such as the impact of high mobility on friendships, identity formation in a multicultural setting and interactions within and between the various cultural groups. It would appear that the highly transient population presents issues not to be found in the home country equivalent i.e. what might reasonably be expected had one stayed in a single location in a home country for the entire school period.

There are examples of families who have successfully moved out of the expatriate 'bubble', such as Brian and Diana's family, as well as those firmly locked within it. It is important to stress the complexity of the situation and avoid assumptions either about boundaries within cultures (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) or changes over time (Hammersley 1991), as no doubt views of the participants can alter in time; as indicated in this study by attitudes towards the local people that form after arrival. Brian and Diana's family live in a Chinese compound rather than one of the international ones; they have numerous close Chinese friends from all walks of life, regularly interact in Chinese cultural activities and have developed their Mandarin skills to a high standard. This

suggests that given time and the desire to establish intercultural relationships (Byram 2003, Hill 2006) many, if not all TIS students, can also do so.

Issues of friendships were by far the strongest feature that arose from the early stages of the interviews. It is clear this is a key concern for participants as they identified and discussed several features such as separation from extended families, experiences of losing old friends, the necessity of finding friendships on arrival and the need for genuine friendships. The repeated pain of loss of friends paves the way for the development of protection strategies to deal with this. Accounts of negotiations of friendship factoring in the estimated time new children will be staying at TIS was the most extreme example of the defensive mechanisms. More common is the subconscious act of keeping people at arm's length to avoid emotional upset when they move on. The long-term consequences of such behaviours are not known but the reported instances of adult TCKs feeling a sense of 'not-belonging' (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Straffon 2002) suggests there will be life-long effects.

The descriptions of various types of friendships overlaps with discussions of cultural dissonance as friendships are mainly formed within the divisions in the school. This is reinforced by the Korean and non-Korean division where new students are placed into one of the groups by 'self' and 'other ascription' (Byram 2003). The accounts of what can be best characterised as a *functional* friendships on arrival appear to demonstrate how the loss of home country support systems can be in part replaced by these friendships (Hess and Linderman 2002, Poore 2005). Time was also identified as a major factor in functional friendships due to the combination of short term contracts and lack of uncertainty about duration.

In combination with friendships, participants discussed identity formation, depicting, for some, confusion about their nationality, and for others a duality of identities; increased national feelings at the same time as they develop an international identity. One explanation appears to be the need to negotiate an individual identity within the nexus of group and individual interactions. National identity was used to allow individuals to determine group allegiances within the school, community.

Participants' reported negative behaviours and attitudes also indicate they are 'free' from normal expected behaviours. The short-termism and uncertainty about duration and being trapped within compounds have created an environment where behaviours and attitudes are modified to function in the context of living in a privileged

‘island-like’ community. The next chapter develops these ideas and shifts the focus into the international school.

5 PERSPECTIVES OF TIS

Following on from Chapter 4, this chapter focuses in more depth on students' and parents' perspectives of TIS, their attitudes towards the curriculum, academic expectations and response to TIS's philosophy.

5.1 PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSE OF TIS

Diana highlighted the different driving forces behind international schools.

is it a school which is been run purely for money making purposes or is it a school which was founded for the purposes of serving the expatriate community? I think they can be quite different things (D2a)

This dual nature of international schools was discussed at some length. Therefore in this chapter, the term 'purpose' has two connotations; one being the pragmatic reasons of why TIS exists and the other concerning its philosophy. Participants introduced and discussed a combination of the idealistic and the practical purposes of the school, mirroring the discussions of Lewis (2001), Cambridge (2002a), Hayden *et al.* (2003), Cambridge and Thompson (2004) and Hayden (2006) (see sections 2.3 and 2.4). Practical topics included learning English, having a quality education away from home to allow for eventual reinsertion into the home country, not having a viable alternative and socialisation with different cultures to allow for future global mobility. The 'idealistic' was expressed in the discussions of multiculturalism and intercultural understanding.

5.1.1 PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

Meeting the different needs of TIS parents and students is highly problematic. Participants gave various examples of expectations: academic rigour leading to university success; a means of continuity so children can return to their home country education system; experience of interacting with other cultures so children can have future international business success; and for non native English speakers, wanting their children to learn English.

I guess with any school, just preparing them for university and life (R1a)

the school has English, the English basis of international curriculum, so English is the main point to follow our school system (M3a)

Parents understand multiculturalism - but they still want the school give more -

written and strict education system to help them prepare for university entrance exam (M4a)

my basic premise about what an international school is all about specifically, in a small provincial city in China because let's face it, it is not the same in Shanghai or Beijing or Ulaanbaatar, or maybe Ulaanbaatar more [laughs], it is an international standard educational organisation which has to be there to provide that educational service to children because it would not make sense to try to go through the Chinese schools system with the one or two or three years or maybe twelve years by choice which the parents have to be there before they go back into their home school system at the end of their stay (D4a)

Roxanna explained the dilemma of an international school trying to cater for numerous nationalities and making content relevant to the students. She is concerned about her daughter missing out on American history but understands the school must consider more than one culture and she discussed the dilemma in deciding which system and content to follow (Hayden *et al.* 2000, Hayden *et al.* 2003)

they have people from all over the world so there has to be that focus where you are not going to learn about US presidents because people from Korea and Britain don't care about US president's history (laughs) so it has to be very different type of learning for that and it has to be fair (R1a)

5.1.2 NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE

Expatriate parents' selection of schools is determined by what is the best available in the local context (Potter and Hayden 2004). One of the factors of choice Cambridge (2002b) identifies is a disinclination to use the local educational system. However, TIS parent participants explained that it was not so much reluctance, but that they perceived they did not have an alternative in the local system.

ok, I mean, my family and I arrived in [place name] in 94, that time there wasn't an international school, we tried to send our kid into - erm - Chinese kindergarten, it was a model kindergarten and [son] came in the first evening and told us that he wouldn't do that kind of crap (B1a)

Cambridge (2002b) identified local language as a factor in school selection and Diana explained the difficulties of attending local school due to language barriers and differences in teaching styles.

I think hardly anyone who goes through this school could get anywhere in Chinese school, and I think that, firstly we don't speak Chinese and I think the education system in China is very different from the education system we have now or in our home countries (D4a)

Parent participants explained that it would not make sense sending their child to the local education system for a short period of two to three years and then leave the country and return to their home system. Concern over returning to their home country system was a major factor in choice of schools with Marlin, Roxanna, Brian and Diana explaining their requirements.

As the only international school in the area and with parents perceiving there is no viable alternative school, other choices can include home schooling or boarding elsewhere. For most parents TIS is the only practical option and this contributes to the need to provide internationally recognised education and qualifications to allow students access to university (Potter and Hayden 2004).

5.1.3 “ENGLISH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING”

English is the *lingua franca* of the global 21st century (Potter and Hayden 2004) and a key motivator for learning language is commerce and trade (Baker 2001). Most international schools have English as the language of instruction because it has become the dominant international language (Murphy 2003, Yamato and Bray 2006). As Cambridge (2002b) posits and the studies of MacKenzie *et al.* (2003) and Potter and Hayden (2004) appear to confirm, for parents in non-English speaking countries who have a choice of international schools, the dominant selection criterion is school language. This appears to be corroborated by the two Korean adult participants who reported that for Korean parents, learning English was the most important reason for their children attending the international school.

I think Korean parents think English is the most important thing (E2a)

first one is English, if students the English is higher level it is a very good opportunity to enter the school to enter the university, just for English, the main purpose is knowing English (M3a)

MacKenzie *et al.* (2003) and Potter and Hayden (2004) found in their separate studies of international schools in Switzerland and bilingual schools in Buenos Aires that English language was the most important factor in parents' selection. Using evidence from their questionnaire and interviews, Potter and Hayden (2004) suggest parents' selection in Buenos Aires is similar to expatriates living in non-English speaking countries. The authors reported that parents view the learning of English as an 'investment' that would improve the children's career possibilities and that the great

demand in Buenos Aires for bilingual Spanish and English schools is driven by the recognition by middle class families of the importance of English so children can either progress or maintain their position in economic terms in society (Potter and Hayden 2004). English acquisition is perceived to enhance academic potential and increase access to jobs globally and allows students to be able to interact successfully with different nationalities for the purpose of career development (Baker 2001, Potter and Hayden 2004).

most parents want to get their child stay at international school because if their child can speak fluent English it is a very good advantage for getting good job and into university in future (M4a)

they want more English support, increase more time, give more English homework, they want more push to catch up with academic, certainly they want the school to concentrate on academic career (M3a)

John expressed the same idea in straightforward and pragmatic terms.

the purpose of international school is to learn the other language, also to get used to other foreigners (Jo1s)

John's reference to the 'other language' and his use of the words getting 'used to' other foreigners are telling in that he does not say he wants to learn about or share cultures, but acclimatise to them as one might get used to any other irritant. This may be due to his English ability and might not be exactly what he meant to say, yet John does report that he does not socialise with students other than Koreans. This is discussed in more detail in section 6.3.

Byram identifies two broad categories of language schools; firstly, the supported learning of an additional language and secondly, where "*language proficiency is desired [...] as a symbol of identity.*" (Byram 1998). In the TIS context English is not so much a symbol as the means of access to global opportunities.

5.2 PERCEPTIONS OF THE TIS CURRICULUM DESIGN, CONTENT AND APPROACH

TIS deliberately attempts to be international in curriculum design having "adopted" (Hayden *et al.* 2003) in its entirety the PreK to 12 IB curriculum. There is some flexibility in implementing the PYP and the MYP, such as choice of local content,

but the curriculum framework which stipulates time spent on skills and areas of interaction are used to shape the timetable. The Diploma Programme has less room for interpretation as the content is determined by curriculum guides and external assessments. IBO have fully authorised TIS in delivering the three programmes. This forms the organisational framework of the school in number of subjects, contact hours per year, assessment tasks, marking rubric, IBO Learner Profile (and the drive towards promoting attitudes of internationalism), independent and creative learning, non-nation-specific content, transferable skills of research, critical enquiry and reasoning, and supporting home languages.

Frank emphasised the international reputation the IB programme has gathered over the last few years, and this prompted Frank and his father to extend their time in China so he could complete his Diploma. Yet not all participants were as enthusiastic about the TIS curriculum.

I am sure some people aren't happy with the IB, the IBO itself, I know people who don't get along with the system (Ja3s)

So such a kind of linguistic problem is, for students to cope with, so the school now offer ESL, but I think ESL is mostly for Western people for example for Spanishey, Frenchy, Germany - but according to our professional research some kind of ESL programme is especially for Western people, it not work well with Korean people, Korean people need more specific, different style of programme (M3a)

Diana reported on accounts Korean students had given about their return or visits to Korea.

the Korean kids tell me what they go through even with an IBO Diploma, I think they are only allowed to go to two different universities- something like that (D1a)

In addition, Diana reported the struggle of returning to Korean society where to be different was not to be valued (Fail *et al.* 2004, Kusuma-Powell 2004). This illuminates the mind-set of short-term Korean students, as the lack of relevance of the IBO is reinforced by peer pressure on the visits home and the knowledge amongst the TIS Korean students about what to expect on their return. Interestingly, in comparing the Italian school system to TIS, Frank was very positive about the investigation based emphasis.

you study the theory but put into practice, in Italy is more only theory, only the theory (F1s)

In evaluating the school in the context of their previous school experiences, most participants characterised TIS as a welcoming and friendly place. John and Linda described what appears to be a very relaxed atmosphere in the school in comparison to previous schools.

in Korea there is lot of bully, like the higher grades are like - kind of gang, like - it is not a good place to study I think - also if you study really hard and - if you go to university in Korea it is hard to get a job - like - in international school - is a - comfortable place to study, it is a really good condition to study and - and a really good chance to go to other place university in other country's university, I think it is really good (Jo1s)

here it is more like assessment and they also give you chances to cooperate with your friends, to communicate so here we have students from different cultures and countries and I think it is better if we work together because we get to understand much more and then we get to communicate (L1s)

Linda said she was amazed at the contrast between her home school and TIS. She discussed uniform, hair, wearing school badges and obedience. At one point she used the word 'torture' to describe her previous school and when I asked her to explain she answered;

Korean student go to academy right after school so they come home after 12 o'clock after studying and then some of them study longer if they want to, and here it is so different because you don't have to do such kind of thing, but in Korea you have to be like that to be good at studying but here it is different, it matters how much you try and how much you understand (L1s)

I suppose it is academically easier for them here as they have more time with the teachers and - I think that compared to a lot of the German schools I know, the resources here are good - the learning facilities are really helpful to students (C2s)

there is a lot of difference between international school and Korean school - since one of them is like - the good thing about the international school is the teacher doesn't pressure us to do more study - in Korea - like 10 o'clock they are studying for the whole time in school - also they go to academy - like, they sleep for about 3 or 4 hours, however - in international school there is break time and a lot of free time so we can enjoy our school life (Jo1s)

Linda described her freedom to express ideas and so by comparison TIS is relaxed. In contrast, Charles who had previously attended a much smaller school of about 30 students in total said on arrival he found TIS to be very strict. Perceptions of rigour and strictness appeared to be determined by comparison to previous schools. This is a dilemma for TIS as curriculum expectations and standards are measured by families from

27 different nationalities and their previous experiences.

5.2.1 ATTITUDES TO THE TIS CURRICULUM

“The relaxed and seemingly undisciplined atmosphere of the international school setting might confuse families coming from countries where the school system follows traditional teaching philosophies.” (Ezra 2003: 130).

There was evidence of different attitudes towards the TIS curriculum. Eileen discussed Korean parents’ confusions over the learning style and she discussed at length the contrast between inquiry-based learning and the rote learning she had experienced in Korea. For her an obvious advantage was her mental arithmetic ability as she is far quicker than her English husband. She sees this as a major failing of the IB approach and thus believes Korean education to be ‘better’ due to its more rigorous methods. Yet it was this rigour that led to students and parents in this instance describing the additional stresses Korean students have both in Korea and at TIS. For example, knowing they shall return to such an academic system requires extensive preparation and if this is not being done at TIS, students need additional classes outside of school time. Some students do not receive these extra classes, which also adds to the Korean students’ difficulties when returning as they are less able to cope. This also increases the likelihood of Korean parents not wishing to ‘buy-in’ to the IB curriculum as it will not serve them in preparing to return.

I can make it correct, my husband he can make work, really slowly, 30 minutes, but just one minute I can make it correct, here in Western international school studying you need the working out, but in Korea the correct answer is very important and they just different maths style, and different study so they come back they have a Korean problem, maths problem, sometimes science all different problem, very difficult to come back to Korea (E2a)

Also of interest is Eileen’s use of the term ‘Western international school’. It is clear that according to Korean participants TIS is perceived by the Korean community as Western rather than international.

our educational system and expectation is different from Western style because most Korean students has a experience in Korean school and then they come to international school so they still have a Korean education style approach - so at the beginning it is very challenging for them to change their mind or change their approach to learning (M4a)

The curriculum is perceived by all the participants as Western in its approach.

Although Roxanna is concerned about her daughter missing American content, she is otherwise not concerned about the methodology. In contrast Korean participants reported that Korean parents are unhappy with the TIS curriculum. Eileen, Marlin and Linda were most critical of the ESL programme.

Diana believes the IB programmes do suit her children's needs as they provide transferability, which is a key feature of the IB.

so you then have a transferability issue - that's being fulfilled, so that when you leave that system, whether you leave that international school at Grade 2 or high school you can smoothly at least go on back into your own home country system or go in to the system of another country because expats obviously often transfer elsewhere, that's the basic requirement (D2a)

However, there is little research to indicate the success of transferability between IB schools or in returning to home country systems and Kusuma-Powell (2004) warns of a significant mismatch between international schools and academic gaps that can result in children moving from one international school to another.

5.2.2 FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Linda, John, James, Charles, Diana, Frank and Paul agreed that the friendships between students and teachers were much more evident in international schools than in their home countries (van Oord and den Brock 2004).

I think here also where you have an expat community, you also sort of have - more closeness between the students and the teachers (C1s)

teachers are more friends than teachers (F1s)

I mean you really view teachers here as friends whereas when I go back to Austria you just view them as people who teach which is very different to those teachers here (P3s)

Various factors emerged to explain this feature, including school and class sizes, expatriate community compound living arrangements and the absence of traditional support systems.

The scene at TIS is similar to that described by van Oord and den Brock's (2004) participants from two residential United World Colleges in Wales and Norway where the international school students described teachers as "more of friends, let's say, rather than a teacher who is just there to teach you," and their participants also reported that the

likeliness of socialising outside of class time was high as students and teachers live on campus. The authors concluded the mutual respect and friendly relationships between teachers and students was enhanced due to living side by side and being more likely to socialise with their families than would happen in their national systems. For TIS expatriates there is a high likelihood of socialising either in the compound club house or the relatively few numbers of Western bars and restaurants or the expatriate social events.

I think, since, in many cases they live very close together and - especially in [place name] you have this situation where everyone goes to many of the same places, especially on weekends and things, so you do find that teachers and students have a lot more in common to talk about than in schools in Germany that I know about (C1s)

As well as increased likeliness of social interaction outside of the classroom, friendships between students and teachers in the international school context have added significance due to the loss of home country support of extended families and long-term friends (van Oord and den Brock 2004, Poore 2005).

I feel badly for some of the other families that come along, you know the Germans, the Koreans whatever, these kids come along and they have this added challenge on top of all these other challenges, you know changing country, losing your extended family for a while (D4a)

Poore (2005) makes the point that the relationships with staff compensate for “the absence of our students’ traditional support systems” and are essential to the child’s development as children living in a privileged world of servants and drivers need positive role models;

“Our students know what we also know in our hearts: that for our schools to truly fulfil our lofty missions, they must be based upon sincere, honest and mature relationships. Relationships that engender trust, support and forgiveness. Relationships that model the empathy and perspective necessary for intercultural and, therefore, international understanding.” (Poore 2005: 359).

Student-teacher relationships have added significance for international schools as the role does not end with the school bell but extends into home and social lives.

5.3 TEACHERS AS ROLE MODELS

The negative attitudes of some TIS students appear to be, to some extent, modelled on teacher behaviours. Poore (2005) and Hess and Linderman (2002) warn that parents and teachers need to model internationalist behaviours and exhibit respect and

sensitivity when talking about or interacting with other cultures, especially with the host nation. This was echoed by Diana as she discussed the mission statement.

IBO tells you to have a mission statement, so God you have to have a mission statement, but I think that what students and parents take on board more than any written mission statement is what actually plays out in practice everyday, it's the same as the way that kids emulate us, they don't listen to our lectures, I mean if you asked one person in the school to quote the TIS mission statement I don't think they could (D2a)

Diana's comments reinforce Lewis' (2001) point that "schools embody the values they espouse" rather than the mission statement. Diana is describing the school's hidden curriculum i.e. everything that is learnt outside of the taught curriculum (Lewis 2001, Hayden 2006). International schools can operate with as much or as little ownership or identification with the IBO philosophy as they wish and teachers either unwittingly or knowingly, can strengthen or undermine a school's philosophies through their behaviours, treatment of subject matter and people, and content selection (Hayden 2006).

it's not just incorporated in your mission statements but lived out every single day - this whole philosophy of cultural tolerance that it's not just lip service that's paid to that, that kids really are taught - by modelled behaviour I think, from teachers, administrators, parents, everyone around them, to be tolerant of all the other cultural and national and religious groups that are around us (D2a)

Given the importance of such modelling, it is, therefore, most disconcerting when Charles, in describing the expatriate community keeping exclusively within their social and cultural groups, says this behaviour is seen "*especially from the teachers*". This suggests a major failing on behalf of TIS as the teachers are seen in the community, rightly or wrongly, to be setting a poor example in terms of developing intercultural relationships. Charles goes on to find reasons for such behaviour and these were later explored independently by Linda and Harold. They explained that teachers are at TIS to teach, that is their job - they are not here to learn Chinese or to interact with the local community. This might explain the situation but it fails to excuse it or to explain why such exhibited behaviours, that are clearly contrary to the schools' and IBO's mission statements, are being presented by teachers.

5.4 DIFFICULTIES FOR STUDENTS RETURNING HOME

Participants referred to the affective influence of TIS life by explaining how they believe they have changed and so therefore feel they do not 'fit in' on their visits home;

and so experience a form of reverse culture shock (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Traffon 2002, Fail *et al.* 2004). Two main areas of concern emerged, one being social and the other was academic continuity. The importance of the international school's provision is a key factor in parents' decision to come to the area. Parents are concerned about what happens when they leave TIS and return to their home country systems.

for many of my German colleagues coming to China and coming to this school is a big shock because they have, the first question is how do I ever get my kids back into the German system, that's the biggest worry (B1a)

for most of my German colleagues before they arrive and when they are here it is a constant question how to get the kids back into the German system (B1a)

Frank was aware of how his perceptions have changed and he was proud of his own achievements, marking him out to be someone of interest on his return home (Fail *et al.* 2004). Frank described the advantages of his international school experience and reported being respected and admired in Italy because of his languages and knowledge of the world and cultures (Pollock and Van Reken 1999), although he seems oblivious to the comment about the homework which seems to contradict his statements, suggesting he is being flattered for reasons other than a genuine interest in his life story.

I think they kind of admire me, a little bit, because none of them have had the opportunity to live abroad for, even for a year and for me I stayed away for four years - and they also admire me because I speak another language - and my vision about the cultures and about the world in general is probably wider than they have, so - I think when they look at me they ask me a lot about China because I think they are really interested about the culture, they ask me to do their English homework and all that, so I think they kind of see me with a different light, let's put it that way - I think it's good, yeah (F1s)

John displayed the strongest notion of remaining Korean, not wanting to socialize outside of his Korean group or speak English except when he has no choice. He described how he is more Korean in China as living in the Korean community is exactly like it would be back in Korea (see section 4.3.4). However, this contrasts sharply with his account of visiting Korea and how he does not feel that he has a place or friends or a sense of truly belonging. For TIS children, the identity constructed in a multicultural context may not match what they discover in their home country, or prepare them for how they are treated there, and so they might experience a painful sense of displacement and become dislocated from their perceived versions of identity (Fail *et al.* 2004).

I have lived in foreign countries for more than five years now, like when I am talking to my parents or when I go back to Korea and I am talking to my old friends I seriously feel like there is some cultural difference like, because I have influenced so much that the way I think doesn't fit them and the way they think doesn't fit me, so there is some kind of wall, it is just different in some kind of way (H3s)

it's kind of embarrassing to say I am living in China because - like Korea - they - ignore Chinese because - I don't know the reason - but they ignore Chinese, like - so when you say I'm living in China it will be a disadvantage to live in Korea - sometimes they ignore us or bully us, yeah, like - it's kind of embarrassing (Jo1s)

The difference between John and Harold's accounts of returning to Korea, as compared to Frank's return to Italy, echo the findings of Fail *et al.*

"For the Japanese, for whom conformity to the group is important (Brislin, 2000; Hofstede, 1997), the returnees are viewed negatively because they are not like everyone else, and to be different is not a virtue. For the Americans, who value the individual, the literature is often about making the most of the unique experiences the individual has had, and thus to be a TCK is of value (Pollock and Van Reken 1999)." (Fail *et al.* 2004: 7)

Diana reports experiences more in keeping with Hess and Linderman's (2002) warning to returning expatriates to advise their children to stick to common subjects as people who have never lived abroad may not be able to relate to accounts of life overseas or simply think they are bragging;

something I do experience a lot is when I go back to especially Germany and sometimes to Scotland is that you do feel you don't fit in quite the way you used to because your experiences are quite alien compared to those around you, and actually there is an amazing degree of non-interest in what you go through just in your daily experiences, shocking to be honest sometimes, when you start in with a couple of comments and you get big yawns and 'can we change the subject? we know you live in China, yes we know you have been in China for 12 years now, what are you trying to prove with that?' kind of thing (D4a)

In addition, international school children without full exposure to their home country and culture may be forming romanticised versions of national identity based on their perceptions of their parents' culture (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). Such romanticised views can be reinforced by short visits to the home country. Frank described Italy as a vacation place, an idea which several other student participants also reported in that they only experience their home country during vacation time and this provided them with a lopsided understanding of the country, its people and their lives.

when I go to Italy it's more like a vacation to me coz we always go there for Christmas and summer vacation only (F1s)

As maintenance of home language is essential both for reinsertion and cultural identity (Tannenbaum 2003), the Korean families have the conundrum of helping their children maintain academic Korean while studying in English. Eileen and Marlin reported that it appears that many children are struggling to do either which makes Eileen's claims that most Korean parents were unaware of this problem even more serious.

I did some tutoring and one of my children, my student had been living in China for five years and in year 11 [16 to 17 year-olds] his expression writing was just like a 11 years old and I am told by Korean parents they can't understand the problem, they can't understand, 'he can speak Korean, how come he can't do that? he is Korean' and I say 'I'll show you' and show their work, most Koreans can't understand, their child can speak Korean, how come he can't study Korean? - but it's different isn't it, studying language and speaking language is different, reading and writing you need practice but speaking you can just do living here, and Korean parents' problem is their children can speak English, they think their English is brilliant and I say 'no, they must read book and write in English' (E2a)

According to Eileen, Linda and Harold, there is a significant gap between the actual ability and the Korean parents' perceived levels of their children's academic English and Korean (Ezra 2003, Kusuma-Powell 2004). However, Marlin claimed that most parents were aware and very concerned about the situation.

I agree, actually most parents worry about this matter, if they go back to Korea for three or five years one thing is, after they go back to Korea, how to adapt to Korean education system, that is the main concern for the Korean students, if they study in our school from an early age they have a big problem because their mother tongue - the second one is if their mother language is not good they can not improve their English skills at a higher level especially at a higher academic level (M4a)

Regardless of whether Eileen or Marlin most accurately reflect the majority of TIS Korean parents' views, both do confirm TIS should be addressing issues of both functional and subtractive multilingualism (Cummins 1992, 2001, Baker 1993, 2001, Murphy 2003, Kusuma-Powell 2004). Eileen and Marlin did agree that many Korean students do not have the same access to curriculum content or intercultural experiences as non-Koreans, contrary to the advice of Baker (1993, 2001), Nguyen *et al.* (2001) and Tannenbaum (2003) who argue that L1 development needs to be effectively supported.

One other factor Eileen, Charles, Brian and Diana addressed was time;

I met a lot of Korean students, if they want to learn English they need to change their circumstance, just one year, two year's international school children, they just play with Koreans, but after three years or four years they will mix with different students and different countries and they change, the first year and the second year they don't change very strongly (E2a)

The average time to develop to what Cummins has coined 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS) is 1 to 2 years and 'cognitive/academic language proficiency' (CALP) in 4 to 7 years (Cummins 1992, 2000, 2001). Eileen and Marlin report that most Korean families stay for either 3 or 5 years, but given the added drag factor of Koreans not needing to establish 'survival English' on arrival, there is an increased danger of highly mobile multilingual students who never reach full academic competency in any language (Ezra 2003, Kusuma-Powell 2004, Hayden 2006).

Eileen is concerned that the Korean students' repatriation problems are not being fully understood, communicated or dealt with, either by the school or the Korean parents. She explained that some parents believe their children's language and academic abilities to be stronger than they are;

my dad is a primary school principal and he says that a lot of Koreans go out to a different country and they learn English, not that brilliant English, they come back three years later, their Korean is so poor they can't go in the same grade, if you are Year 5, they have Korean exam they just go Year 3, but here a lot of Korean parents don't know, they just go 'my children can speak English and if they return to Korean they can go back to the same grade' but we have Korean exam and if they can't pass they can't go into the same grade (E2a)

Marlin also expressed concern about this;

normally after 3 or 5 years most Korean students go back to Korea, they have to adapt to the Korean education system so the problem is they, one side they have to study the international curriculum, and the other side they have to prepare Korean subject so they can adapt to Korean school when they go back to Korea (M3a)

The significance of this should cause concern for the school and the Korean parents as it indicates that for some students, their time at TIS contributes to a stagnating of their academic abilities while parents and teachers are not fully aware of their situation and its implications.

5.4.1 THE SCHOOL AS A PROMOTER OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

As an IB World school, TIS is committed to providing intercultural opportunities so students can learn and interact with cultures and develop knowledge and respect for them. To this end TIS operates various initiatives for students such as International Day celebrations, UN Day parades and cultural assemblies presented by different cultural groups e.g. Korean, Japanese, Dutch, German and Canadian. The school Mission Statement is translated into six languages and is on the school website, in the school foyer, in every classroom and in all publications and documents that go home to parents. Flags representing each of the students' home countries adorn the school's foyer. External accreditation visits have required extensive documentation demonstrating the schools' commitment to its Mission Statement. Likewise IBO visits have fully approved the delivery of the three IB programmes of PYP, MYP and DP. Paul, James, Charles, Harold and Linda explained how TIS actively promotes internationalism through curriculum content, international events, assemblies, host culture activities and charity work.

I think this school does promote internationalism if you look at the events we have, we have UN day, international day, we have all those flags hanging around and all the separate countries the school has and I think the students themselves value every country (P3s)

However, further discussions on this topic moved on to the dilemma of having many nationalities and cultures with different educational needs and expectations. It is because of this that Brian argued that much of the intercultural activities at TIS were tokenistic only. He sees proof for this in the ongoing conflict between different national and cultural groups.

I think most, many people are living a kind of illusion (B4a)

Brian believes conflicts are evident due to the widely differing demands of families from different countries and this is always going to cause conflict as TIS can not reproduce every national school system. Other participants also reported the school's attempts to be international and intercultural are superficial.

you can't just have all the fun parts of international days where everyone dresses up in their national costume, full stop, obviously that doesn't do it so you have got, it's like two layers and obviously your basic layer, and the whole need of why an international school in any community such as this had to be started (D2a)

the true internationalism is not just delivering the basic education but being able

to go beyond that if you can, whether that is properly represented throughout the school and whether you get your parent community on board (D2a)

Marlin described the potential for conflict and explained how negotiation is required to cater for different groups. Marlin explained that Korean parents understood and accepted multiculturalism, but for them it was not as important as a rigorous academic education.

some parents shared such a kind of outlook and they can understand, they are willing to accept international school philosophy but there are different group and different expectation - so how to make them match and understand philosophy? (M3a)

Diana believes that parents' attitudes are more important and they have much more influence on their children than teachers or the school (Hess and Linderman 2002) and Frank illustrates the example his parents set;

kids are going to fall in line with what they know their parents want, on the surface at least (D3a)

when my parents go out they always stay with their friends and not Chinese people (F1s)

This suggests that despite the school's commitment to promoting internationalism, many students and their families either do not share this ideal or are unaware of it.

5.4.2 INTERNATIONALISM OR CAPITALISM?

James was the strongest in professing his internationalist ideals while he was also the most direct in relating monetary values in the sense of future career prospects to learning languages, understanding cultures and becoming accustomed to living abroad (Potter and Hayden 2004). He used the word capitalist to describe his family and he is clear about his parents' expectations.

I was more or less raised in a capitalist family so it's my, whether spoken or unspoken, objective in later life should be to earn money, this is what my parents want me to do - thus I should, in my age now, 18, I should be loosely looking at how global markets develop and as China is developing rapidly it is most likely going to be a big influence, most likely going to be a big influence on my later life should I go abroad which I know I want, to work abroad and China seems like, in the next twenty years, seems like a good place to go (Ja3s)

James conveyed his dual acceptance of internationalism in his desire to

experience and understand other cultures, and the need to be successful in his career in the global market place.

most parents, if not all parents want their children to succeed in school and I think in every school system parents want their children to do well and achieve good grades, but I think in our environment achieving good grades can come in connection with learning how to appreciate different cultures (Ja4s)

He couches his desire for internationalism in terms which reflect future economic potential (Bourdieu 1986, Potter and Hayden 2004). James appears to personify what MacDonald (2006) describes as the two bottom lines of international schools in operating as a business and as an 'international' school; MacDonald also uses a metaphor of spectacles with lenses that need to be aligned so both the internationalist and pragmatic aspects can operate side by side. One of the outcomes of globalist education is cultural convergence drawing on the values of capitalism (Cambridge and Thompson 2004) as is evident in modern technology, entertainment, the use of English as the international language and the growing global economy (Clarke 2004, Davies 2006). Other participants did not see anything contradictory in promoting internationalism in a globalised market setting, with Diana strongly arguing they must exist in tandem and Brian explaining how the parents are attracted by career advantages for their children if they enhance their international understanding (MacDonald 2006).

a school has to be financially viable, so more and more an international school has to be run like a business, that may seem a bit cold, but it has to from the point of view to financially survive and make a bit of profit and have some financial cushioning to see through times like SARS and bird flu and tsunamis and things like that (D2a)

from their perspective, to put the kids into international school is very attractive because most of those parents have been living abroad for some time, and have enormous problems with the understanding of Western culture and speaking the language and even when they speak the language, not really understanding why we are so strange, so if they can give their kids exposure at this time then it is very beneficial to those kids from their perspective (B4a)

5.5 CONCLUSION

Following on from the previous chapter in which life in the expatriate community was investigated, this chapter focussed on the international school. It explored participants' expectations of the school, their views on the curriculum, teacher and student relationships and academic problems due to high mobility. The problems of

students returning to their home and the extent to which this is being recognised or addressed by parents and the school were also examined. Finally, there were discussions of the hidden philosophy of the school compared to the stated one.

Parents were clear in their different expectations of the purpose of the school. English development was a key factor, specifically for non-English speakers (MacKenzie *et al.* 2003, Potter and Hayden 2004). The demand for English was articulated in terms of future capital and benefits (Bourdieu 1986, Potter and Hayden 2004) with examples of functional cultural knowledge (i.e. “*to get used to other foreigners*”, Jols) confirmed by several participants. The importance of English acquisition was made very clear by the Korean participants, reinforcing the work of MacKenzie *et al.* (2003) and Potter and Hayden (2004), yet the unchecked majority of Korean students in most classes appears to be the main factor in blocking their language development. The native English speakers had different concerns, that of continuity, reinsertion and getting into university. All participants were clear that there was not an alternative in the local education system (Cambridge 2002b), not just because of language barriers but because of very different teaching and learning styles. Long-term China residents Brian and Diana were adamant about not sending their children to local schools, despite their fluency in Chinese and immersion into the local culture, demonstrating that even for the strongest China-philes there is a perceived lack of suitability. For short-term expatriate residents there is no consideration of attending a local school.

The Korean participants were also very clear in characterising the IB and the international school as Western. This too is reinforced by the staffing of the school (see section 3.3) and the design of the IB programmes, all of which strongly reflect an Anglo-American-European approach. This reveals an interesting conundrum in that despite the best efforts of the IB and TIS to be international, they are perceived to be so only within a Western framework. The frequent casual use of the term ‘other’ in describing people, languages and countries indicates a prevalence of conflict and division. Alternatively it could be that most of the Korean participants, in describing themselves as “one blood”, “one people” and “not mixed”, currently have no desire to move out of the Korean only groupings. In the next chapter the division between Korean and non-Koreans is discussed in more detail.

Another concern that arose in this chapter was the importance of adults in the expatriate community acting as role models. Students described being more likely to be

friends with teachers than they would be in their home country due to living along side each other, small class sizes and being isolated in the relatively small expatriate community so that often students' families and teachers will socialise. Given the isolated nature of the school community, the expectations on teachers to act as role models in promoting internationalism is high, especially as this is their job in the school, yet participants indicated that teachers are not doing this, identifying them as the group most likely to stay exclusively within the expatriate bubble. This appears to be one of the major contradictions of the international school used in this study.

The difficulties of returning home is well documented in the TCK literature (Bell 1997, Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Straffon 2002, Fail *et al.* 2004) and it was illuminating to hear accounts of visits home as well as concerns about eventual reinsertion. There was an interesting contrast between different groups, with Frank's triumphant descriptions of returning to Italy where he is respected, in contrast to John's embarrassment, a feature reinforced by Diana's reported conversations with other Korean students. The concerns of German and American participants about returning are in part magnified because they are currently in China with some reluctance; they are here to work only and many feel they have little choice as so much of their industry has been moved to China. Their priorities are not about internationalism but about getting their children back into their home country systems.

Of most concern is the academic 'drag' for non-English speaking children not staying long enough to develop "cognitive/academic language proficiency" (Cummins 1992, 2000, 2001) in English, but long enough for their home language academic standards to stagnate as is clearly the case with many Korean students. This should be a key concern and action is needed to address this.

Finally, the different views expressed by participants about the dichotomy between the school's intended aims to promote internationalism and what is actually being played out were explored. Participants were initially supportive of the idea that the school promotes internationalism and gave various examples such as flags around the school and cultural assemblies to support this point. However, after further discussions, participants revealed that behind the flags and UN parades, there was what Brian described as the "illusion" of internationalism, that is division and conflict between the different cultural groups. The ideological purpose of TIS is to promote international understanding (Lewis 2001, Cambridge 2002a, Hayden *et al.* 2003, Cambridge and

Thompson 2004); this is the stated purpose of TIS and IBO as indicated by their mission statements. Yet the school serves the needs of expatriate business men and women who are living in China to take advantage of the current economic benefits and while the vast majority of international schools exist because of market forces (Cambridge 2002b, Poore 2005), the accounts of the TIS participants tally with the arguments of MacDonald (2006) and Cambridge (2002a) in that the school can only promote internationalism if successful in a free market framework.

In the following chapter, the divisions and conflicts above are discussed in more details. The reasons for the conflicts described, which are contradictory to the schools stated aims, do make more sense when considered in the light of description of participants being in the community for work reasons, in many cases reluctant to come to China and have little wish other than to see their time through, make money and return to the home country system.

6 LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND CONFLICT IN THE TIS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The reports of conflict within the TIS school community provide the focus for this chapter. Various conflicts and the struggles between languages and cultures which contribute to both international understanding and to the forming of barriers that limit internationalism are explored. Through participants' exploration of the complex relationships between languages and cultures at TIS, they revealed the tensions that exist in the TIS expatriate community.

"The relationship between language and culture is complex and fundamental to the socialization and academic achievement of students." (Ezra 2003: 127)

6.1 LANGUAGES

From the initial analysis of topics grouped into the domain of 'languages', the main themes that emerged were learning English and Chinese and maintaining home languages. Participants described an exciting educational atmosphere with numerous languages being spoken in the school and the opportunity this provides for linguistic and cultural awareness. However, the conflict between the Korean and non-Korean groups was the main discussion point. Pressures and occasional conflict over language usage and barriers were also explored e.g. for non-English speaking students on arrival. Participants also described Mandarin usage in the TIS expatriate community and considered reasons why it was not being widely used.

6.1.1 "I LIKE THE MIX OF LANGUAGES"

In addition to learning English being a key feature of international school selection (Cambridge 2002b, MacKenzie *et al.* 2003, Potter and Hayden 2004), participants discussed the benefits of a multilingual environment with several describing TIS as providing a great opportunity for students to develop awareness of different languages. As James explained, it is not a matter of being able to speak several languages (although James is bilingual), but being immersed (Baker 2001) in an environment where numerous languages are being spoken.

I like the mix of languages, I like languages so it's always fun to hear, even though you don't - when you spend time with many people from different

countries even though you don't learn their languages, it's a lot of fun, we exchange little bits of, you know 'this means this in our language, what does this mean in your language?' I don't know, that's always pretty fun (Jals)

James uses the word 'fun' three times and 'like' twice in this extract, emphasising the language exchange as a social event between friends discussing their different home countries and languages. Diana shared the same excitement and provided critical insight into the multilingual environment;

maybe for my kids who have been through this system they don't know anything else so maybe it is quite difficult for them to stop and analyse it but I do have something to compare it to and I do know that if I had had that kind of classroom environment at that age I would have loved it, I would have lapped everything up just to have all the different languages to listen to, but then I am a language person, I love languages and I think it is good for the kids (D3a)

This is not a formalised process; the language exchange occurs because of the cultural and social mix; people are spending time together, both in the classroom and out of school, and discussing their differences at a conscious level while subconsciously developing awareness of the many different languages which may combine to provide them with metalinguistic awareness and abilities (Cummins 2000). In keeping with the IBO mission statement, this environment can be an exciting opportunity to develop a world-view (Pollock and Van Reken 1999), to learn about various cultures and to develop respect and genuine interest in them, something which most participants clearly do. International school children often have a sense of the world beyond their own travels which comes from first hand accounts of their classmates (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Ezra 2003). For example, in explaining the need to look at issues from different viewpoints, James discussed both a German and American perspective and demonstrated the "intercultural communicative competence" of "*savoir s'engager*" which is the ability to critically evaluate his own and other cultures (Byram 2003). Diana too demonstrated "critical cultural awareness" (Byram 2003) as she discussed issues facing Korean teenagers and reported this as far as she was able, from their perspective.

two of [son's] friends told me that it is not just the difficulty of getting into university in Korea, but also the fact that you are looked at differently by your Korean peers, by everyone really in Korean society when you go back, 'what, you lived abroad? and you went to an international school and you didn't even go to Korean school there?' and automatically they look down at you (D1a)

As James explained, intercultural discussions are not straightforward, but he sees such barriers as enriching as they allow him to act as an "intercultural mediator" (Byram

2003). Byram (2003) describes the mediator as being able to step outside of their own and the other culture and so critically consider both. They can communicate in various contexts with people from other cultures either through understanding and experience of that culture, or by being able to comfortably relate to new or unusual settings (Allan 2003). The act of exchanging such references is itself educational, as James and his friends are interacting and developing meta-awareness of their cultural and linguistic differences as well as developing insights into other cultures, if not necessarily full understanding (Cummins 2000, Byram 2003) and cultural respect grows out of this desire to interact and communicate (Hill 2006). Yet, as section 6.3 shows, this attitude is not shared by all members of the school community, as some groups either do not have access to, or utilise, cultural exchanges.

6.1.2 “THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WAS THE LANGUAGE”

International school children starting a new school face difficulties and stresses which can be hugely increased when they do not have social or academic competency in the language of instruction (Ezra 2003, Kusuma-Powell 2004). In traditional teaching models, teaching is one directional; the teacher imparts knowledge and the student absorbs, while assessment is used to measure the gap between the two (Doll 1993). At TIS this gap appears to be at its greatest for ESL teachers and students where due to limited English and the teacher not being able to speak a student's home language, communication takes place through the restricted vocabulary of the beginner English student. This enhances the students' feelings of isolation as language is essential for understanding of both the curriculum content and of other cultures in the school (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Ezra 2003). It is therefore, quite powerful to hear an account of a student who has gone through such an experience, where very recently he or she could not articulate or communicate their feelings at the time of instruction, but are now able to do so. Frank and Linda's descriptions of their first few months provide insightful accounts of the frustrations and difficulties non-English speaking students experience on arrival.

I knew a couple of sentences but it was nothing like what I am saying now, so basically I knew how to say 'how are you?' and 'bye bye', an international school has different programmes because not only are there English speaking people but there are foreigners basically and they have to learn English in order to understand (F1s)

Frank described how initially he wanted to return to Italy, the ways in which he could and could not communicate, the conflict with his family due to his language frustrations and his eventual pride in being successful in developing English. His frustration is effectively described when he recounted the desire to make himself understood but not having enough vocabulary to do so;

it was a whole new environment first of all, new friends, and the biggest problem was the language because I really didn't know what to say because I didn't have enough words to have a dialogue with someone else (F1s)

Frank reported that it took him one semester to develop “basic interpersonal communicative skills” (Cummins 1992, 2000, 2001), something he contributes to three factors: the time and effort he put into studying English, having another Italian student in his class who was able to help him but most importantly the friends he made in the school;

by the time it was Christmas I was able to speak and to understand most of the classes basically, and by that time I already had quite a lot of friends (F1s)

Frank demonstrated that language is crucial for friendship to be established (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Ezra 2003) and that friendship supports language acquisition. Linda also described her difficulties on arrival. She entered the school with some trepidation as she was concerned about her limited English.

when I first came here I thought - pretty much I would have some problems in English because English is not my native language (L1s)

Linda had attended a summer school in Canada prior to China, which had given her some grounding in the language, but she still struggled on arrival. Linda, as did Frank, described how she had to work hard. However, unlike Frank, she had to make friends with others outside her own cultural group in order to develop her English.

I would say my English is much better than his [her younger brother] - in my opinion I think it is because I try harder because I don't be one of those Koreans who gather around and just talk Korean all the time (L1s)

The experience Linda described is quite different to Frank's. Her story is set in the context of complex interpersonal and group interactions (Ezra 2003, Byram 2003) and the struggles for cultural dominance (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004), so she was not just learning English but establishing her position and identity within the complicated relationships between the Korean and non-Korean groups.

6.1.3 SUPPORTING HOME LANGUAGE

The rich mix of languages described by Diana and James is also an indicator of the challenges for TIS as a school. As Tannenbaum (2003) argues, in the context of immigrant minority groups, daily use of a home language is essential not just for maintaining a language but for reinforcing the “psychological reality” of cultural identity.

“Language maintenance has been researched extensively, and most researchers agree that daily intergenerational use of a minority language is crucial for its survival” (Tannenbaum 2003: 374).

Tannenbaum is referring to the demise of a language, but the comments are also relevant on an individual level; if students do not have full exposure to a language in all contexts, their abilities will stagnate. Without academic home language support, the choice of schooling in English is counterbalanced by losses in first language development (Nguyen *et al.* 2001). James explained that for many international families this shall not be a concern as their children will attend university in an English speaking country and will seek work in international companies, with their English ability ultimately being realised as capital (Potter and Hayden 2004). Yet, such optimistic views ignore the importance of L1 development as children returning to their home country schooling system will suffer if their home language academic levels have not developed at the same rate as their home country counterparts, while at the same time their L2 ability may not have developed enough to allow ‘cognitive/academic language proficiency’ (CALP) (Cummins 1992, 2000, 2001).

The benefits of fully supported bilingual programmes have been demonstrated in various studies (Nguyen *et al.* 2001, Baker 2001) with home language ability shown to support second language development as cognitive abilities and concepts can be transferred across languages (Cummins 2001, Ezra 2003); a point Eileen and Marlin addressed when discussing the importance of first language support in developing second language abilities.

I think if you wish to learn English, your mother tongue is also important, if you have a good mother tongue, after that you can also learn English (E2a)

The development of the school language is supported by the maintenance and growth of the first language (Nguyen *et al.* 2001). Although extra-curricular home language support is offered at TIS, there are too many nationalities to offer bilingual

programmes for all languages and grade levels, so by default the school operates as a “total immersion” English school (Baker 2001). Therefore, despite not having the same financial or social difficulties as state schools with large multicultural populations, TIS families do experience many of the same difficulties of language and cultural loss or enrichment (Kusuma-Powell 2004).

6.2 COMMUNICATING FOR SURVIVAL

This section addresses the various attitudes to learning Mandarin Chinese which emerged, such as it is essential for understanding Chinese culture and having full access to local life (Hess and Linderman 2002) and it facilitates independence in China. Participants also identified that it provides a great opportunity for future careers and it allows the development of a world view (Pollock and Van Reken 1999). In contrast, participants argued that for some TIS students and their parents, learning Chinese is not important or essential as there isn't the pressure or necessity for survival to learn.

it's important to learn the language and I think - it's disappointing when people live in a country for a certain period of time and don't bother to learn the language - but - I believe in [place name] it is possible to get by just in English (Ja1s)

I think some people would be surprised as to how little Chinese you actually need to get by here - I mean you could get by almost totally in English if you wanted to, this school you don't need Chinese at all unless you actually have chosen Chinese as a subject and outside of the school there are few phrases that you need and then if you aren't going to interact with Chinese people on a social basis you wouldn't need to speak Chinese very much (C1s)

now days English is all over the place so they can order in the restaurants in English, I mean the restaurants they would go to, Western restaurants, or supermarkets where the labels are in English or order on [internet supermarket] where they can order in English and it is delivered to the door (Ja4s)

TIS expatriates use English as the common language as the school, compounds and more frequently Chinese staff will communicate in English. Foreign experts in Chinese companies will have full time translators to assist. TIS parents mostly work in an English speaking environment, it being an increasingly common prerequisite that Chinese nationals are fluent English speakers before being considered for white collar work in international companies.

in the company like my dad's company, it is a German company in China but the language is officially English which is kind of funny (C4s)

Participants reported that some members of the TIS community have come to believe that learning Mandarin is irrelevant as they are so isolated from China. Some students and parents do make a huge effort to learn Chinese, but according to the participants many of the TIS community do not progress beyond 'survival Chinese'.

the bubble, most of the people live in the bubble because they can't really communicate with the Chinese - and they don't really feel dependent on them because they have got everything they need in [supermarket with foreigners' goods] and probably all they need to say is 'this', 'this' and 'how much?' - erm - and the main thing is that it is isolating from the rest of the Chinese people, we don't use public transport and most often we have two or three places we go every time and everything else is unknown to us (P4s)

I am probably a perfect example of that because for example when we moved to America or the States there was no way you could get around without learning English and so there was a need to learn English and we learnt it fairly quick I guess, but here I guess that to be honest - Chinese is not vital to your everyday life, when you have spent eight hours at school and three more in your compound it's not quite as vital, which is actually pretty sad, it's a sad thing, yeah (J4s)

More disconcertingly, James, Diana, Brian and Charles talked about people they knew who voiced the opinion that there was no value in learning Chinese.

I know some people that just didn't want to learn because they thought they would never use it again and couldn't imagine why anyone would want to speak it anyway (C1s)

Hess and Linderman (2002) stress the importance of learning the local language to enable expatriates to have the ability to venture out beyond the compound rather than remain a "Prisoner in the Palace". They see a direct correlation between the isolationist attitude of compound life and lack of local language ability, a situation matching that reported by the participants.

it also depends what, where you live, erm, I do think some people live quite isolated, if you live in [expatriate compound] or [another expatriate compound] there is a whole community of expats and so on and relatively few Chinese people I'd say, then yes you are less likely to use Chinese, in comparison to if you were living in town in a flat then you are a lot more likely to learn Chinese because you have to use it with the people around you all the time (C1s)

It would appear that when accommodated by English speaking Chinese people, there is less need for expatriates to learn Mandarin as communication can effectively take place at work or in the compound. Although he can not see an alternative for his overseas

workers at present, Brian is critical of the compound mentality for stunting the development of Mandarin and describes how many short-term TIS expatriates have a limited view of the reality of the local situation as all their information about China is 'filtered' (Hess and Linderman 2002).

speaking the language definitely helps, I think that if you work here and don't speak the language it's like swimming on the soup, you only see so much of the bottom, and you are very much - information you live with is very much filtered by the Chinese media anyway and filtered by the gossip of the international circles in which you move, I'm not talking about the news, it's just like 'how is life about? what are they doing here? how do people think?' that kind of thing (B1a)

Brian is a fluent Chinese speaker, having studied Mandarin at university and lived in China since 1994. Brian's comments about 'swimming on the soup' are echoed by Roxanna's description of her frustration with the manager of her property; she does not speak Mandarin and uses the manager to tell the workers ('these people') what to do.

we have to, through our translator, get on with these people and we are doing the best we can (R3a)

For Roxanna, the various day-to-day issues such as getting her lawn mowed require communication through channels, rather than directly with the Chinese workers.

after having been here for almost a year we should be really settled and enjoying China and having a good time and it's been a real struggle because every time we turn around there is always something going on, they are not going to cut my grass and they promised they would and they are not going to do this and they said they would (R1a)

This situation of TIS students and parents not learning Mandarin is complex and needs to be understood within the context of short term overseas residents living in the compound being, to an extent, trapped in circumstances beyond their control within a non-Mandarin speaking bubble.

As James introduced and later confirmed, despite living in China it is not always practical to learn the language;

circumstances at the time didn't allow me to study Chinese because I was going back to my home country after one year and I chose subjects according to what I would have been studying after I came back to Germany so Chinese wasn't an option as I didn't have Chinese in Germany (J1s)

the one big thing I would say is that they learn English first instead of Chinese, let's say for non-native English speakers, they come to China but because of this bubble they are probably placed in they first learn English and not Chinese, the

language of their guest country (Ja4s)

Four years later James is still in China and is studying Mandarin at a local university, again demonstrating the unreliability of long term plans for the TIS community. Roxanna also factors in her transient lifestyle. She described how in her previous posting she made the effort to speak Indonesian, memorising a set amount of vocabulary each week. Yet on arrival in China she has not been as quick to learn. Perhaps one factor is because once before she invested the time and effort in learning a language but no longer has the opportunity to use it. Her words ‘if we are here’ demonstrate how she questions again investing the time to learn a language without knowing how long she will remain in China. Charles too considered length of time as a factor.

if people know they are only going to be here for a limited amount of time I think they don't find it worthwhile to learn Chinese if they are going to leave again - some people find it very hard, I mean there is a lot of characters that you have to learn and there is, definitely, if you are going to school at the same time, to learn a language may be quite difficult (C1s)

While the context may to some extent explain why many TIS students do not learn Mandarin or develop respect for the local culture, it does not justify it. A great opportunity is being wasted and there is the potential for the international school experience resulting in students having negative attitudes towards the host country rather than being excited and appreciative of it. Such attitudes are indicative of the various conflicts found within the school.

6.3 CONFLICT IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Discussions of conflict from within the school focused on the Korean and non-Korean divide. It can not be assumed either group is homogenous (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) as the umbrella term ‘non-Korean’ includes 23 nationalities and 52% of the TIS student population, and likewise there is divergence within the Korean group, yet all participants identified a distinct division in terms of socialisation and common language usage i.e. English or Korean, and connected this to the cultural divide between the two groups.

“Where people from two social groups interact and are in competition, they force each other to act in terms of their identification with one or the other group.” (Byram 2003: 51)

- Byram’s views were shared by Charles.

I don't think there is any resentment, you know 'they are forcing us, you know, when I talk with my friend I want to speak Korean' I think it might be the only time nastiness might come up, but other than that - I think also it forces the other, seeing as you have Koreans as the main social group then it almost forces the people, the non-Koreans to make friends or form bonds with people who aren't from their own country since, I don't know, there clearly aren't as many Germans in 11th and 12th grade as there are Koreans so you have the Germans and New Zealand and Australian people all hang out together and ok they do share sort of a similar Western culture (C4s)

6.3.1 “THEY ARE TALKING KOREAN ALL THE TIME”

In contrast to Diana's and James' accounts of the exciting mix of languages, participants also described various language and cultural barriers with the most visible being between the Korean and non-Korean students.

There was an apparent contradiction with Linda and Harold strongly condemning Korean students for only speaking Korean while being fluent and confident English speakers themselves. Linda and Harold clarified this by explaining that their class was unlike the others in the school as they had made the conscious decision to use English as the *lingua franca*. This seemed to be supported by John's poor English ability and his reports that he only ever speaks Korean socially and only speaks English in school when asked by a teacher. It is unreliable to make a judgement based on one student, however, further evidence was provided by Paul who, as part of his IB Diploma course and under my direct supervision, undertook a survey of all Grade 8-10 students during homeroom time (i.e. 100% of students present that day responded) to ask about their language usage. One Korean student reported speaking English socially, with all the others answering they speak Korean only, which provides an indication of their social groupings outside of school, as is also evident during school time in the classroom, dining room and playground. All other nationalities reported that they speak English and their home language(s) socially. This reinforces Harold's and Linda's claim that their class at TIS is the exception rather than the norm.

Linda described how she had to manage both her Korean and non-Korean friendships to develop English. Unlike Linda, John's English levels have developed at a slower pace, though he has been at TIS for four years. John has much less exposure to non-Korean cultures than Linda as he says he only socialises with Koreans.

While there are numerous reasons which may explain why John and Linda have different rates of learning such as natural ability, self-determination, family support,

career aspirations and peer support, Linda accounts for three main factors. She described class sizes, friendships with non-Koreans and her determination to master English. Harold said that maturity is a key factor and it is important for students to realise that it is inappropriate to exclude non-Korean classmates.

Linda and Harold have ten class mates; five Korean and five non-Korean, of which four are classed in the school as native English speakers or equivalent (see appendix 3). This contrasts with John's Grade 10 class where there are 22 students of which 72% are Korean and two students are native English speakers or equivalent. Baker (2001) recommends a 50%-50% language balance for bilingual classrooms and while TIS is not attempting to operate a bilingual classroom, current percentages are contributing to a language imbalance in which one language is being used to the exclusion of the other (Baker 2001). All the participants that chose to discuss this agreed that the dominance in numbers of a non-English speaking group was having an impact on the development of English skills.

I think the problem comes because there are too many Koreans (H4s)

so I think the smallest groups is more likely to learn English (P3s)

When such language imbalances exist, children are likely to switch to the "higher status, majority language" (Baker 2001) which is Korean for Korean students and English for non-Korean students. The continuing imbalance is perpetuating the situation.

if you just arrive and you have no English it is impossible for you to make foreign friends, it's just not possible, you can't communicate, you can't do anything with them so as a result you stay with the Koreans, as you stay with the Koreans you only make Korean friends, that's the biggest problem, here, the language, if you are not fluent enough with English you just can't make foreign friends, that's really difficult (H3s)

if the Koreans are speaking Korean then the reason they are speaking Korean is because they are Korean, I guess it is easier for them to speak Korean, especially if they are new from Korea, it is easier to speak Korean than English, since there are only Koreans nobody would speak English to them, would they? it is just like if there are just Germans together from Germany I think we would speak German together and not English (P3s)

Due to this divide, many Korean students are less likely to experience the language exchanges described by James and Diana and will not have the same English language exposure that non-Korean students do. If learning English language is their parents' main purpose in sending children to the school (MacKenzie *et al.* 2003, Potter

and Hayden 2004), which according to John, Eileen and Marlin it is, then it is questionable the extent to which parents' expectations are being fulfilled.

6.3.2 PERSPECTIVES OF NON-KOREANS

Two views emerged from the non-Korean participants; they were sympathetic and understanding of the Korean students' added language dilemma, but also reported comments from other member of the TIS expatriate community who were resentful of the impact of the dominant Korean population on English language in the school. Diana and Brian explained the two contrasting views.

I know this is quite specific to TIS, and there are different views on this, I know we have, I think it is 40% Korean student body, and I am one of those parents and I don't mean that I say everything positively but it is one of these things you hear, 'the challenge of the Korean community', but I think it's been great, it's been an eye opener for me, I don't see it as dragging this school down at all, that's just the nature of the school body, the school wouldn't be the size it is if it wasn't 40% Korean, it would probably still be in an old hotel building adding on classroom by classroom (D2a)

the biggest single group, almost half of the people are not from a Western country, they would have a very different educational demand, so you might call it cultural dissonance but it is even worse, you are talking about a different school system (B4a)

Brian explained that he hadn't previously considered this issue from the Korean parents' point of view. Instead he described the concerns that were raised by Western parents; the apparent preferential attention given to the Koreans (translation of school documents and a separate Korean Parents' Association) has caused a backlash with some other parents, concerned that the school is spending too much time catering for one group. Brian was critical of the dominance of the Korean population and argued for limiting numbers of any one nationality. He reported on the Western parents' concerns about academic English use in the school.

Western parents complain that their kids do not get enough English and they complain that their kids come home speaking pidgin English because the majority of the kids are not speaking English and up to now only these concerns were raised and very loudly raised and obviously if you have 80% of kids in one class not speaking the language then you have problem, then you have to address it, you have to take special care and address it (B4a)

Roxanna too was concerned that classroom content was pitched at an ESL (English as a Second Language) level rather than stretching her daughter's English

ability. Roxanna discussed the social implications for her daughter unable to communicate with the majority of her classmates. Roxanna's comments have strong undertones, indicative of the stresses between competing groups.

this school has a lot of work to do to bring these two groups together, having the particular Korean group doesn't help, I think we are trying to bring it together but it is a slow process and it may just have to be - more time and energy to make it that way, but as the non-Korean group is getting bigger and bigger now, I think that something needs to be done before it really splits apart (R3a)

The 'something' she wants done is the limiting of numbers of Korean students and for stricter discipline to stop them speaking Korean in class. In contrast, Linda's fellow students expressed sympathy, empathising with their Korean school-friends;

if you come from Korea, it is hard to start talking English because if you never did it why should you start now if you have the opportunity to talk Korean to people? (P3s)

since they are forced to learn English in order to do their homework and studies and things, there might also be this unwillingness to also speak English with other people, their friends and things because English is always going to be connected to work and school and Korean will be the intimate language to use with their friends (C4s)

so it would be interesting to find out if the Koreans - why aren't so many Western students making friends with the Korean students, is it the other way round? or are the Koreans closing themselves off from the rest of the students? or are they separately making friends with the rest of the students? or are the Koreans not thinking this is wrong? (Ja4s)

Charles likened the pressure on Korean students to speak English to him having to speak Latin or even in binary code; he could work hard trying to do so during the school day but he would not consider using it as a social language.

6.3.3 "KOREA IS NOT MIXED"

In explaining the division between the groups within the school, both Marlin and Eileen made clear the importance of understanding that the Korean people are a distinct cultural and ethnic group and separate to the rest of the expatriate community.

Korea is not mixed, only one blood, we very strong together (E2a)

how can I explain this properly? - Korean people is one - race - racial problem, so it mean that Korean people is not familiar with making friends with the different racial groups - there is some cultural gap and there is some communication problems and there is some - different way of thinking - so this

kind of block is very difficult to communicate with or make friends with the Western people (M3a)

Marlin explained that Korean culture is very complex and Confucian in nature with a strong group ethic emphasising social position and peer relationships. It is common to work collectively, share homework and support each other in class. His comments support Kusuma-Powell's.

“For example, international school teachers sometimes comment that Korean students do not often participate in class discussions and that they ask few questions in class. Whereas in a Western educational tradition, discussion and the challenging of ideas are valued, in a Korean education, with its strong tradition of Confucianism and emphasis on respect for authority, memorization is valued.” (Kusuma-Powell 2004: 166)

Marlin further explained that it is important to stay within Korean friendship groups. Brian and Harold discussed group dynamics in this context describing how the dominant members of the Korean group determine the nature of interaction with others.

he says [son] there are some Korean kids who are quite open to the idea of talking to the Western kids and some of them are only stuck in the Korean system, he observes that in one class there is this kid and his father is a leading manager in one of the bigger companies and the kid is automatically the self-understood leader of the pack and he doesn't interact much with the Western kids and when he does it is very much 'I am the boss of the Koreans and as boss of the Koreans I tell you this' and that kind of thing, so this kid has not learnt or understood that you should interact on a level basis (B4a)

some people from Korea have real serious feelings against Japanese or Americans, but some people don't, but when it comes to a big group and those are the people who lead them it really causes serious conflict (H3s)

Despite Marlin and Eileen's descriptions of Koreans as 'one race', it can not be accepted that the Koreans at TIS are a homogenous group (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004) and Linda and Harold described many of the conflicts within the Korean community such as language and friendship choices. In addition Linda discussed divergence between Korean students and their parents.

I might think that something is right while my mum would, as a Korean, would not agree (L4s)

There is a dilemma for TIS students as they can experience a clash between peer approval and identification with their home country identity (Ezra 2003). As Drake (2004) and Poore (2005) described, the child who has worked hard to develop an

international perspective while their parents are fully locked into a mother culture will experience dissonance at home. Likewise the Koreans students who wish to interact interculturally are in conflict with those who wish to stay exclusively in Korean groups.

6.3.4 LANGUAGE AS A BARRIER

you don't get to understand what the others are talking about and it forms a different culture in the whole school (L1s)

I also think that it is probably the language, this is the barrier, like when I talk I tend to talk English but if you look at Koreans, most of the Koreans, they will if they are together talk Korean (P3s)

It is common for Korean students to arrive at TIS with little or no English and Linda described how some of them may not have the inclination to study hard to learn English while others will not be able to, or wish to, break out from the Korean social groups. For non-native English speakers, TIS operates as an “immersion classroom” (Baker 2001) in that students need to develop English to function. However Koreans have another option as they can rely on their peers for functional support. Frank explained that language is essential for friendship to be formed (Pollock and Van Reken 1999, Ezra 2003), so either he spoke English or he could not understand what was happening or make friends other than with one Italian boy; yet new Korean students can make plenty of friends without speaking English. Korean groups in class have stronger English speakers relaying information and class content in Korean, thus reducing the need for the less able to speak English for survival.

Korean students can survive without speaking English because there are so many other Korean who can speak English so they can translate for them and they can learn right there and they don't need to speak English, that is the problem with it (H4s)

The students have effectively established bilingual classrooms with more able speakers interpreting for the less able. Marlin explained it was an important social responsibility to help each other but Harold and Linda see this collegial support as inhibiting rather than helping;

there are a lot of Koreans here and Koreans are friends with Koreans mostly, so the main problem that Korean people have here is because that doesn't really help them increase their English ability (L1s)

In addition, Harold explained the difference between Korean students speaking

their own language and those who deliberately hide behind it e.g. he described the trick of Korean students swearing in Korean at their unsuspecting teachers while smiling to their faces, for the benefit of their Korean classmates. Roxanna reported her daughter complaining of deliberate code-switching which excluded her from class jokes. Frank and James explained this is not a Korean only trick as all nationalities will code-switch but it is not as evident with smaller national groups.

one thing which is a probably a negative aspect of international schools is - that everybody does speak their own language and there are usually people who speak the same language and - so language is used sometimes as a tool to exclude people from conversations - or - but - people talk behind other peoples' backs because they can and because other people do not understand (Ja1s)

When asked to clarify a point he made about the separation between Koreans and non-Koreans, John depicted a clear division between the groups.

you have to speak English to conversation, but Korean friends, like - I always speak Korean to Korean friends in classes, it is - difficult to have good friend who is non-Korean because they - play each other, and Korean - it is separated, like - it's Korean and non-Korean in international school - so that is kind of disadvantage to learn English in international school - like (Jo1s)

Linda also connected the language barrier with the cultural conflict.

it's just a different part of a group of people who are Koreans, and the other are just 'oh they are Koreans and they are talking Korean all the time' - I hate that (L1s)

The stresses are reinforced by Linda's last three words. Here the language divide causes misunderstandings about the various cultures and how others perceive them. Linda experiences the conflict from both groups.

6.3.5 "THEY ARE ALL FOREIGNERS"

Most participants talked at length about the social divide in the school between the Koreans and non-Koreans, and although Harold used the word 'hate', the conflict between the groups can best be described as 'passive' in that it is mainly acted out by separation, where non-Koreans and Koreans largely sit, play, talk and study as two distinct groups. Both the Korean and non-Korean participants frequently referred to the others as a separate group and often used the terms 'Koreans' and 'non-Koreans' or sometime 'foreigners'.

H some kids just hate foreigners and some foreigner just hate Koreans and

this relationship doesn't get better

PH when you say 'foreigners', who are the foreigners?

L people who are not - erm

H people who are not, if you are Korean, if that is your nationality then it is everybody else [laughs]

PH so people who are not Korean are the foreigners?

H [laughs] they are all foreigners (L4s and H4s)

The peer pressure reinforcing the division is very strong, as Eileen reported.

the Korean's problem is the students, they just want to play with Koreans, if [daughter] want to include in Korean group, club, she can't play with the Westerner, that's the problem and that is very strong and really difficult, with Korean group, and they say 'you need to choose, Korean or other group' (E1a)

This peer pressure is greatest for those students wishing to be members of both the Korean and non-Korean groups.

"...this is problematic for people who would like to belong to more than one group but are forced to choose by people who perceive the groups as mutually exclusive, and therefore the identities associated with them as mutually exclusive" (Byram 2003: 51-52)

For Roxanna, intercultural interactions are limited and not of great importance. She was quite negative about the percentage of Korean students at the school and the use of code switching and exclusions her daughter reports. The intercultural exchanges she reports are very limited, e.g. she wants to talk to her elderly Chinese gardener but is unable to do so beyond saying 'hello'. Roxanna's other example of intercultural exchanges is telling as she describes having discussions with other Westerners about different terms for household objects.

then there is the kids that are not necessarily from China in this school but you get the opportunity to meet people from Australia and learn how they say a different word for a trashcan than we do and - you know, so it is definitely different and exciting (R1a)

The interaction she reports is exclusively with other Westerners, and so reinforces the Korean and non-Korean division within the school.

This 'passive' conflict can have quite upsetting repercussions. In a follow-up discussion Eileen described an incident in school where a teacher asked the class to get into pairs and the Korean girls played "scissors, paper, stone" to see who would lose and have to sit next to a non-Korean girl. This indicates that for the majority of the Korean students and majority of non-Korean students, there is limited friendship and intercultural

exchanges. This is not to suggest that there are no friendships between the two, as this is not the case, as evidenced by Linda's class, although she was very clear that she sees her class as an exception in the school. Even so Harold and James were of the opinion that friendships outside of these two groups will never be as strong as friendships inside.

friendships between Koreans and non-Koreans do exist and in the end we all get along, but I would say the friendship between two non-Koreans is probably stronger than a friendship between a non-Korean and a Korean (Ja3s)

I believe I am fluent English, but sometimes I am talking to foreign friends and I don't think I have the friendship, as good a friendship as I do with the Korean students - I mean I think it is a bit of culture and stuff, not just the language, I just think it is my home country and it doesn't matter how long I have been living away, I am still influenced by Korean culture (H3s)

6.3.6 A KOREAN AND NON-KOREAN DIVIDE

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) warn of oversimplifying the characteristics of cultural groups and though it is evident that within the TIS school community there were those with very different attitudes and cultures, there is also a large degree of homogenisation due to the globalisation of cultures (Clarke 2004, Davies 2006). However, while the Korean and non-Korean clusters should not be considered homogenous (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004), they do characterise the divisions in the school as evidenced by the participants' accounts. The school's very evident Korean and non-Korean divide contradicts the school's declared aim and purpose to be an IB World School and promote intercultural understanding (Allan 2002, Ezra 2003, Drake 2004). New arrivals are effectively separated into one of two camps due to language and social barriers and by 'self' and 'other' ascription (Byram 2003). The interplay between the two is complex especially as the non-Korean group is comprised of many nationalities that are only united by virtue of being minorities, even though all participants showed that there is strong recognition of them as a grouping. This may be because they share the same global socioeconomic culture of free market materialism as TIS expatriates come from the same social strata regardless of home country i.e. they are predominantly educated, middle-class professionals and have similar aspirations and expectations. Alternatively, the division might be indicative of the stresses caused between groups as they struggle for dominance (Byram 2003).

6.4 CONCLUSION

Building on the two previous chapters which examined life in the compound and attitudes towards the school, this chapter focused on the conflict within the school. The enriching opportunities for language and cultural exchange were identified, but more focus was placed on the difficulties caused by language barriers between different groups. Participants were clear that it is not necessary to learn Mandarin in order to live comfortably in the expatriate bubble, yet this was to lose out on a unique opportunity to develop an understanding of Chinese people and culture. One main concern was that new arrivals come expecting to need to speak Chinese and interact with the local community, and most initially want to do so, but on arrival into the bubble, their interest dies; some move on to develop very negative views, indicating the negative effects of the time spent in the international school community.

The chapter moved on to explore the conflict between the Korean and non-Korean groups. The main ideas that emerged were that the stresses of overseas life in isolated compounds were creating an environment where new arrivals without previous direct knowledge of other groups were finding themselves forced in to one group or another, and as a result negative attitudes have formed. As the interviews progressed, the conflicts were more and more evident. According to participants, there is a complex relationship between socialisation and language acquisition (Ezra 2003) as students entering into the Korean group would have less chance to develop English and are more likely to have their academic Korean stagnate. Frank demonstrated his 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS) within 6 months and quickly moved on to develop 'cognitive/academic language proficiency' (CALP) (Cummins 1992, 2000, 2001) and completed the full IB Diploma in English after four years at TIS. In contrast, John has also been at the school for four years and though he has developed his BICS, he struggles to have enough English for an interview. John explained that he does not socialise outside of his Korean friends and has no desire to do so, and this appears to have a very negative effect on both his language acquisition and subsequent academic performance in the English medium school. His academic Korean is likely to be stagnating as he will not have the same exposure as he would have done had he been in a Korean school and therefore, he is losing out on two counts. High mobility and short-term stays were also identified as key factors, with many students not staying long enough to benefit from their language development, but long enough for their Korean to suffer. The concern

raised by Brian that parents are concerned with the amount of Korean students in the school not accessing the English curriculum indicates that the English language exposure for all students is being limited.

Participants confirmed the divisions in the school and discussed how language barriers are preventing intercultural exchanges, contrary to the expressed desire of TIS to promote internationalism. Participants were clear that numbers of students was a key factor with both Korean and non-Koreans articulating their concerns over too many of one nationality in the international school.

The complex relationships are just as evident within the Koreans groupings as some Korean students refuse to be drawn into this division, as Linda demonstrates through her ready involvement in both groups. Inter-group interactions are never simple as groups can not be considered uniform or stable within their language and cultural boundaries (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004).

TIS is sensitive to the needs of the Korean population. Many Korean parents do not speak English and so all school documents are translated into Korean e.g. weekly newsletter or letters home. Other national groups do not have these services and are expected to have adequate English if they are to understand the literature from the school. The PTA nominally represents all parents but currently does not have any Korean parent members, ostensibly because they are member of the Korean Parents' Association which operates in Korean rather than English. The school has a Korean Liaison Officer and with the Korean parents' group, he meets the Senior Management Team on a regular basis to explain concerns and also have the school communicate issues to the parents. This shows the willingness of TIS to engage to some extent with the Korean community. Unfortunately, it is not enough to solve the Korean and non-Korean divide.

7 DISCUSSION

Through locating parents' and students' perspectives of their TIS international school experience in order to inform future practice in international education, that is, clarifying if international education is taking place as it is normally defined, many tensions and contradictions were revealed. The results show (sections 4.3 and 6.3) that in TIS dissonance is intense and counter productive to the school's aim "to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" (IBO Mission Statement 2007). This is apparently going unnoticed behind social politeness and a myriad of language and cultural barriers. Various forms of cultural dissonance (Allan 2002, 2003, Drake 2004, Poore 2005) were evident; between parents' expectations of a school and the IBO curriculum (sections 5.1 and 5.2), between the Korean community and the Anglo-American dominated school culture (sections 5.2.1 and 6.3), between Koreans and non-Koreans (section 6.3.6) and finally within the Korean community (section 6.3.3), where peer pressure is on Korean students to stay in home-country groups only. Currently there is no dialogue in the school addressing the Korean and non-Korean division or to explain the nature of cultures in conflict and so multiculturalism is being hampered because of cultural dissonance (Allan 2003). Whereas students reported being happy and enjoying their time at school due to friendships with students and teachers and a welcoming environment (sections 4.1.2 and 5.2.2), the very negative comments about the local language, culture and people (section 4.3), and the conflict between different groups in the school (section 6.3), need to be addressed.

During the exploration of an unfamiliar cultural scene (Spradley 1979) and by employing 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Straus 1967) as part of the ethnographic interview approach, the main hypothesis that emerged from the data collection and analysis process is that for some students the affective influence of an isolated international school life can result in strongly negative attitudes leading to social and academic dissonance within the school community contrary to the school's mission to promote internationalism. These attitudes appear to be reinforced by a short-term mentality caused by international school families' uncertainty over the length of time employment contracts or projects will last, and living in an isolated island-like community.

Most participants clearly overlooked the importance of international understanding by making excuses for not making a genuine effort to study the host language and culture of the host country. International school children have to learn the local language in order to enrich their cultural perspective and experience interculturalism in bringing together cultures into a relationship, but many TIS children do not take the opportunity to develop their Chinese language skills outside of compulsory lessons in school and so do not take advantage of the golden opportunity they have.

There is an apparent failure of the school to understand the parents' needs by focusing on the IB programmes when the parents and students are more concerned with learning English and returning to their home systems (sections 5.1 and 5.4). Likewise the school's focus on internationalist philosophy appears to be far less important to parents than their children's university and career success, which creates an additional form of dissonance that TIS needs to address.

Finally, the distinct division between the Koreans and non-Koreans (section 6.3) is also a significant concern as it limits academic development for both groups and reinforces notions of racial separation with the school appearing to condone such division by its lack of awareness and subsequent inaction.

7.1 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL; A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

For those within the dominant culture of the school with similar Western values and norms, there is less dissonance than for those in minority cultural groups (Allan 2003). This point appears to be supported by the discussions of academic gaps coming from Korean participants and the claims that TIS and many other international schools are largely mono-cultural, dominated by Anglo-American culture (Allan 2002, Drake 2004, Poore 2005), which suggests TIS more readily serves the academic needs of non-Koreans. Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) concerns about the "ways in which language and literacy are at times used to marginalize and disempower particular individuals or minority groups" are significant for TIS where numerous non-English speakers do not have exposure to the curriculum content or their home languages. There is also conflict between students wishing to speak their home language and the school curriculum being in English which reinforces the imbalance.

"The fact that languages - and language ideologies - are anything but neutral is

especially visible in multilingual societies where some languages and identity options are, in unforgettable Orwellian words, ‘more equal than others’.” (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 3)

Pavlenko and Blackledge are clear about the importance of negotiation when addressing such imbalances.

“Negotiation is a logical outcome of this inequality: it may take place between individuals, between majority and minority groups, and, most importantly, between institutions and those they are supposed to serve.” (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004: 3)

The success of international school students making use of negotiation to establish international identities and to develop cultural awareness of their own culture and others, depends on whether the common ground is accepted by all parties involved and not just one’s commitment to being intercultural (Byram 2003), yet it is the *intention* which is the first stage towards achieving this (Hill 2006). The divisions within TIS indicate that for some the desire or common ground does not currently exist. However, intercultural learning can be achieved through negotiating cultural dissonance (Allan 2003) i.e. the same divisions that contribute to friction and misunderstandings can provide the opportunity for intercultural exchanges to find the common ground.

“Cultural dissonance was seen to be both the means and the medium of intercultural learning, in that students had to learn from and through this in order to negotiate the minefield of cross-cultural personal interaction.” (Allan 2003: 89)

My research shows that negotiation does not automatically happen at TIS (section 6.3), so the school needs to actively provide opportunities and structures to share cultures and empower minorities in order to moderate cultural dissonance for the minority groups and provide more intercultural learning opportunities for the dominant groups (Allan 2003). As the focus of the local expatriate community and being committed to promoting internationalism, TIS has the responsibility to encourage intercultural understanding. Currently attempts are being made to do this, such as International Day, assemblies celebrating Chinese and other cultures and actively addressing internationalism through the IB Learner Profile (see Appendix 4) and curriculum content e.g. World Literature and Theory of Knowledge. However reported attitudes and behaviours uncovered in this study (sections 4.3, 5.1 and 6.3) indicate that these initiatives are not fully effective in enhancing intercultural understanding.

Most participants felt that the main cause of dissonance between Koreans and

non-Koreans was the percentage of Korean students at TIS and consequently the language barrier which the imbalance in numbers creates; Eileen and Marlin described the confusions between the Koreans and non-Koreans and how genuine misunderstandings can arise while Harold, John and Linda reported instances of more open conflict. Yet it is Eileen and Marlin's explanation that Koreans are a distinct race different to all other groups in TIS that demonstrates the extent of the division and the difficulties of changing it. Fortunately, Linda and Harold's class provide an example to show that, whether due to time spent at the school, acculturation, class dynamics, percentages of Koreans and non-Koreans or the influence of various other members of the international school community, some individuals can successfully participate in both groups.

Straffon (2002) argues it is the role of the international school to help marginal groups become constructive through provision of guidance with explicit purpose in supporting cultural diversity and providing genuine opportunities for multicultural exchanges. This indicates that discussions of the dilemmas of conflict between groups should form part of the support and guidance provided to TIS students. This is not to imply that a solution is simple, however increased awareness of the problems of cultural dissonance through direct public discourse will hopefully lead to improvement. For TIS to effectively communicate these issues and concerns to teachers and parents, information sessions as part of the admissions process can be initiated. This ought to include actively supporting students and their families on arrival to explain hidden cultural norms such as gender relationships, family relationships and social interactions that can cause new arrivals to feel unsure about accepted behaviours (Allan 2003). Given the high turnover of staff and families, it is quite reasonable to have workshops and seminars repeated at regular intervals. In addition information packages translated in to different languages can be produced to highlight these issues. It is important to address these issues before negative attitudes form as well as supporting ongoing negotiation.

7.1.1 PERCEIVED RELEVANCE OF THE IB CURRICULUM

Both Brian and Marlin explained that while the IBO tries not to reflect a specific country it is very Western oriented in its teaching methodology. As discussed in section 5.2, many TIS Koreans perceive the IB curriculum to be largely irrelevant as it is not recognised in Korean schools and universities (although Seoul University has recently

announced it will recognise the IBDP, students must still take Korean entrance exams) and has little in common with the Korean national curriculum in terms of content, learning styles and understanding of qualifications. Marlin explained that for the Korean students the inquiry based teaching style was inappropriate because Korean students are used to a specific approach and have the additional challenge of having to adapt to the international school learning style.

The emphasis on tolerance, which reflects its origins in the United Nations provides one view of reality and can be at odds with the Asian and specifically the Korean Confucian approach to education (Allan 2002, Kusuma-Powell 2004, Drake 2004). TIS's commitment to the IB curriculum needs to be re-evaluated in the light of parents' concerns.

7.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE 'BUBBLE'

This research speculates that the isolated international school and compound life has led to a 'bubble effect' which can result in strongly negative views of the host nation's culture and language, and this promotes attitudes which are at odds with the IBO and TIS aims of developing internationalism (see section 4.3.1). Living in the school and compound community appeared to have a negative effect on some people's attitudes with regard to interactions with the local community and other cultural groups.

As analysed within the data from the first two rounds of interviews and by considering the attitudes towards the Ayis and the local community (sections 4.3.5 and 4.3.6), there was evidence of a significant contradiction between the school's Mission Statement and the perceived realities of the TIS students. Participants reported that within TIS different nationalities and cultures are respected, but this respect does not necessarily extend to all groups; for example Roxanna is very interested in hearing about other Western countries but made only negative comments about the Korean community and mainly discussed Chinese people in terms of her frustrations when dealing with them.

During analysis of such negative attitudes and of the descriptions of the isolated school community, the idea of the bubble emerged. In attempting to explain the isolated nature of the school community, participants used several terms that resonated. In early interviews participants had used these words: 'island', 'own world', 'securely ensconced' 'circles', 'sub-culture', and 'culture within a culture'. I searched the literature and came across two references from Pearce (1994, cited in Hayden 2006) and Pollock and Van

Reken (1999) where they used the term ‘bubble’ to describe the compound life, but it is Poore’s (2005) description of the “gilded ghettos” of the international school community living in isolated compounds in Africa and South East Asia which is the closest fit for TIS.

James and Charles point out that if people live in the Chinese community they have to learn the language to survive and to interact socially which increases their understanding of the host country. As discussed in sections 4.3.1, 4.3.5 and 5.2, participants explained that for many students who live in the expatriate compounds, Mandarin is not necessary for survival. Interactions with the local community are facilitated by translators such as their parents’ Chinese assistants or colleagues who will either communicate in person or through mobile telephones or written messages. New families at TIS are given a taxi book (which has all the Western restaurants, department stores etc), shopping lists and instructions lists which are written in both English and Mandarin so that communication can be established by pointing out relevant words to Ayis, drivers or shop assistants. By relying on these translation services, some individuals never develop their Chinese language; Diana reported one person she knew who was unable to order a taxi after five years living in China and Roxanna admitted that after one year her spoken Chinese consisted of ‘hello’, ‘goodbye’, ‘thank you’, ‘I don’t want’, the numbers one to ten and ‘beer’.

Based on the various accounts of international school life for the students at TIS, there is what can be best described as a ‘bubble effect’ in that not only do families live in a bubble, but doing so can have quite an impact, sometimes very negative, on their views and attitudes in school. This suggests that those living in different circumstances i.e. not in isolated schools and compounds, would be much more likely to learn Chinese and integrate with the local community, but the process of isolation in the school and compound can lead to a lack of interest and knowledge about the local community (see section 4.3.6). When I invited participants to respond to this emerging hypothesis (Spradley 1979) their responses strongly confirmed they believed it to be an accurate description of TIS’s school community (see section 4.3.1).

While Brian laments expatriates failing to experience Chinese people and culture on a social level, he maintains that the current situation is necessary as the short term expatriates would not be able to work as efficiently without the comforts of the ‘bubble’. The provision of expatriate packages that include housing, travel, education and health

care allows foreign companies to efficiently support foreign workers so they can concentrate on their projects rather than on struggling to live in the host country as the expatriate compound allows for security, comfort and ease of living. It would appear that once safe within the compound, or gilded jail or as prisoners in the palace (Hess and Linderman 2002, Poore 2005), expatriates become isolated from the host country's language and culture. However, Brian needs his overseas employees able to arrive in China and get to work with as little difficulty and stress as possible and so the demands for success in the global market outweighs the desire to pursue social intercultural links (see section 4.3.1). To demonstrate how extensive the isolation can be, Paul who is from a Chinese family, described how he finds out about China by watching the Discovery Channel rather than stepping outside of his compound.

Diana, James, Brian and Charles reported that it appears that people are not arriving with such ideas since they may not have had servants or interactions with a Chinese community before, but develop these views after arrival, indicating that negative attitudes are formed after their arrival despite the school's commitment to promoting intercultural understanding.

Hess and Linderman (2002) and Poore (2005) consider the relative wealth of the maids and drivers and how this impacts on intercultural relationships. If the only communication foreign children have with Chinese people is through menial staff, then assumptions about a culture are being based on knowledge of, and interactions with, a narrow section of the populace. Through behaviours such as that indicated by an 'Ayi mentality' (section 4.3.5) which Poore (2005) has identified in other isolated expatriate communities in Asia and Africa, negative attitudes are reinforced by the bubble effect, i.e. life at the expatriate school and compound separate to the host population creates attitudes that are less likely to develop outside of the bubble. Children can develop attitudes of superiority based on observations of how certain nationalities are treated (Poore 2005). However, while the situation of living in the isolated school and compounds may in part explain the separation and misunderstandings, it does not fully explain where the reported negative, racist and stereotypical comments and attitudes come from. Many TIS expatriates do not display such attitudes, yet enough do, such as John, Roxanna and Harold, to make this a concern for the participants and for them to describe it as a commonly witnessed phenomenon (section 4.3.6).

While the isolation might explain the situation, it does not justify it. As Davies

(2006) argues, having empathy is only the start of being a global citizen, instead international school students should feel outraged about social injustices and be prepared to act. The IBO mission statement too emphasises being 'active' in this context. Hayden *et al.* (2003) argue international schools ought to provide a balance between being focussed on future careers and actively embracing philosophies for the betterment of humankind through international understanding. International school teachers and parents have a duty to teach children about acting with respect for all cultures. International education, as normally defined, should support ongoing genuine interactions between different nationalities and cultures. If TIS does not appear to be enthusiastically valuing languages and cultures, then it is contributing to participants' reports of negative attitudes and behaviours in the school community.

7.2.1 THE ADDED NEED FOR INTERCULTURAL ROLE MODELS

The curriculum at TIS is well established and frequently addresses internationalism but the responsibility of TIS teachers as intercultural role models is not being fully embraced. Charles introduced the topic of teachers acting as role models when he identified them as a group within the expatriate community noted for their lack of intercultural interactions as evidenced by their social groups in that they are seen to socialise only with other expatriates (see section 4.3.6). Part of a school's untaught curriculum consists of teachers acting as role models (Hess and Linderman 2002, Poore 2005, Hayden 2006) and as the lives of international school teachers extend into the compounds and the expatriate community this creates an added responsibility for teachers to display behaviours and attitudes taught in the classroom. Diana also draws attention to the importance of parents as role models. Diana reinforces the complexity of the situation by describing the numerous forces at play in the nexus of intercultural interactions within the international school community (section 5.4.1) as it is not only the influence of parents and teachers that influence attitudes but also peripheral information from friends, other families and Chinese connections such as teachers, Ayis or other local people they know. However, Diana believes the parents exert the strongest influence (Hess and Linderman 2002).

Hess and Linderman's (2002) advice to adults to avoid speaking negatively about the host people and culture in front of children has resonance for the TIS community. True internationalism goes beyond delivering a curriculum to ensuring attitudes and ideas

extend into the school community. It ought to be a clearly vocalised expectation of the school that TIS teachers show willingness to learn the local language, speak in positive tones about the local culture and people, and have meaningful intercultural interactions. Poore (2005) sees being an intercultural role model acted out in the management of relationships in that they should be based on truthfulness and sincerity. He emphasised the importance of teacher-student interactions that model intercultural behaviours and international understanding. This has added significance for TIS and other similar island-like expatriate communities where teachers and students live side-by-side and are likely to interact socially and so the roles of teachers, students and parents can become blurred.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND RESEARCH

The use of an ethnographic interview methodology (Spradley 1979) appeared to be an effective way of gathering data to provide an informed picture of the ‘reality’ of the cultural scene as perceived by parents and students and the most appropriate way to attempt to understand the complexities of TIS school life (Allan 2002, Pole and Morrison 2003). The interviews produced extensive data and the subsequent analysis generated ideas which were clarified and confirmed by the participants. In presenting their perspectives, every attempt has been made to minimise researcher reactivity (Hammersley 1991, 1992) through being critical of the participants’ accounts, reporting back to participants for verification or internal triangulation, and therefore representing the “the range of voices in the field” (Pole and Morrison 2003) to explore disagreements and inconsistencies.

The ethnographic interview should be viewed as a positive process for all the participants. It can be an insightful process (Pole and Morrison 2003) and allow the participants enhanced awareness of their experiences. The interview process has the potential to change paradigms and though the respondents may not have had epiphanies, it was hoped they would have greater clarity of their situation. Diana reported that after the interviews were completed she and her family talked at length about some of the issues raised (friendships and transient life). James, Harold, Linda and Paul also expressed similar sentiments in follow up discussions.

7.3.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are several areas that potentially limit this study such as the demonstration

of its truth and relevance (Hammersely 1991, 1992) and the ability to generalise the findings. Ethnography should demonstrate that the accounts of the social scene studied are as truthful as the researcher can make them (Hammersley 1991, Pole and Morrison 2003). The ethnographic interview aims to unravel the truths of the participants' lives through their accounts and re-present them in an academic format. However, this can only produce a representation of the truth, not the truth itself, with Eisner (1992) characterising this process as an ultimately futile attempt to reach a state of 'veridicality'; and though he concludes a pluralistic approach is a more accurate representation of varied and shifting perspectives, the truth remains elusive as the researcher-as-participant influences the account (Hammersley 1992). Therefore concerns about validity, subjectivity, and research and participant bias can not be eradicated, only minimised.

Researcher reactivity had the potential to be highly problematic for this thesis as I am active member of the social scene as a teacher at the school and a resident of the compound. As a teacher at TIS I view the international school from the *inside-out*, while the participants see from the *outside-in*, therefore as a researcher I was exploring an unfamiliar cultural scene. This is a subtle difference but needs to be emphasised and the full significance of this did not dawn on me until some time into the interview stages when my own views on the international school experience were challenged (Pole and Morrison 2003). Even so, at all times I maintained the role of a "professional stranger" (Agar 1980, cited in Pole and Morrison 2003) in that I was aware of the dangers of increased likelihood of researcher reactivity and I sought to minimise them through research procedures and keeping a professional distance. In order to create and maintain a 'distance' it was essential for the research design to ensure that researcher reactivity was kept to a minimum. This was achieved by keeping interviews open, encouraging participants to talk at length, not interrupting except to ask for clarification, frequently encouraging participants to continue, showing interest and encouraging participants to determine the direction of the conversations. This allowed for a rapport to develop which, when added to comments made about the relaxed relationships between students and teachers, appears to have allowed participants to speak truthfully and at length. I became aware that given the flexibility to direct the discussion and content of the interviews, participants steered more towards discussions of their life experience and feelings about school life rather than on school curriculum and international learning experience, and I had to draw participants back to this area. This professional distance needed to be

maintained through the analysis and write-up stages so frequent revisits to the data were needed to ensure the truth of the participants' accounts was not lost. The use of participants as fellow researchers during subsequent interviews also helped to reduce reactivity.

Another limitation of the study is the very specific setting and therefore the extent to which the findings can be generalised to other international schools. I have attempted to provide a full and accurate picture of the context through narrative description and raw data showing numbers, nationalities and time spent in the international school so that the reader can determine if the situation at TIS has resonance for other contexts they may encounter (section 3.3). The social scene encountered is the expatriate life of a small international school's community living in a city in China. As the only international school within 200 miles and serving 355 students with the majority of the parents and teachers living in one of four expatriate compounds on the outskirts of the city with 24 hour security and the amenities of Western life, this creates a separate community of TIS expatriates living and schooling away from the city and statements about the school's community need to be understood in this context. Being socially secluded, the international school takes on added social significance in the lives of the parents, teachers and students. Therefore, not only should conclusions be considered in the light of this being a small school, but also being isolated; isolated in the sense of a wealthy and privileged ghetto of foreigners existing within the midst of a populous Chinese society.

In addition it is always difficult when comparing schools to ascertain if like is being compared with like. For example, some participants were comparing the benefits of an exclusive private education with the state schools in their home countries. Likewise they mostly described TIS as a small school compared to schools of between 1000 to 2000 students in their home country.

A final limitation was that given the makeup of the student population at TIS, I would have liked to interview more Korean students and parents. This was not possible due to my lack of Korean language and the reluctance of Korean parents to participate.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW UP STUDIES

This study has highlighted several areas where further research is needed to provide a clearer understanding of the current situation in international schools. Given the nature of change in international schools and the rapid growth in numbers of schools and

students, such research will need to be regularly re-evaluated for relevance as the relatively little current research in this field is not keeping pace with the rapid increase in international schools. More studies from school-based researchers can elucidate the stresses and conflicts of schools aiming to promote internationalist ideals but operating in a globalised context.

In consideration of the extent of the effect of the island-like existence (see section 4.3), it is clear that Hess and Linderman (2002) Poore (2005) and Hayden (2006) have made some attempt to address these concerns but current theory does not fully account for the effect of attending isolated international schools and this should be of great concern to educators. Little is being done to warn international schools and their communities of the potential negative effects (see chapter 6) of time being spent in an international school in isolated communities with high turnover rates.

This study returns to the essential question of whether or not international mindedness is being developed at international schools and what can schools do to further this. Therefore, as a control or comparison study, it would be of benefit to extend this research into other international schools with equivalent student numbers and a similar isolated position. Other schools in China would be a good fit, though a study in another developing country e.g. India or Brazil could ascertain if these experiences are being recreated elsewhere due to the international school community and not as a result of a specific host country. It would be illuminating to see how experiences in other international schools compare to those reported here. As well as further ethnographic studies, this would provide a good opportunity for the application of other complementary research methods to ascertain repetition of instances and provide breadth of data to support an in-depth study.

One area that has not been studied fully in this thesis due to language and cultural barriers is an understanding of the Korean perspective. I recommend for follow-up studies of Koreans in similar contexts, that a native Korean speaker be part of the research team.

7.5 CLOSING STATEMENT

This thesis has implications for international school policy and practice. It is hoped that the truth and relevance (Hammersley 1991, 1992) of the participants' contributions and my presentation and analysis of them should demonstrate the validity

of the conclusions offered. A clearer understanding of the situation at TIS will extend the current knowledge base and illuminate what is happening not only in this context but in other island-like international school communities and so improve the quality of international school education.

My research shows that the ideals of being an international school in its entirety are not being fully realised at TIS. The results indicate that there is too much concentration on micro-management and not enough focus on the aspirations of the school's stated philosophy. While the study does reveal many positive experiences, it also helps to highlight the various manifestations of dissonance which can only be resolved by direct action. Evidence suggests that despite the full implementation of the IB, for some children their time at TIS causes them to develop negative views. As far as all external indicators can determine (authorisation visits, regular reports, submissions of Internal Assessments, coursework, externally set and assessed exams, and all teachers being fully trained in their IB subject areas), TIS is delivering the full PreK to 12 IB programme across all three sections. The IB Learner Profile is in place in the Elementary section and Secondary students complete Community and Service requirements. Different cultures are celebrated through assemblies and international days and yet negative attitudes are evident in the Korean and non-Korean division and the attitudes towards the local Chinese. This intimates that either TIS is failing to fully implement intercultural and internationalist attitudes of the IB or the IB programmes do not effectively meet the demands of providing an internationalist education.

The implication for future practice at TIS is clear; in order to fulfil the ideals of internationalism, a more rigorous approach is required which would entail the employment of teachers from many nationalities rather than the current Western oriented countries and a review of the current curriculum and methodology. TIS exists because foreign businessmen and women need education for their children while they complete their contracts in China due to the current favourable economic climate. While MacDonald (2006) argues that the twin lenses of capitalism and internationalism need to be in focus, as Diana points out, people embody their own values and parents are the main models for children's behaviour and the fact that parents are only here on short term contracts to make money is the determining factor in attitudes and behaviours. Yet this is a wonderful opportunity to better the world by encouraging future businessmen and women, i.e. current TIS students, to incorporate internationalist ideals into their future

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careers. One key way the school can achieve this is by teachers modelling desired behaviours and attitudes.

After this research I do not advocate TIS dropping the IB curriculum because it is the best currently available: it does not have a single national bias and therefore can best serve the needs of numerous nationalities; it is recognised by many universities world-wide; it is the most appropriate for highly mobile children due to the emphasis on transferable skills rather than content and its commendable ethical mission seeks to improve the world for all peoples and cultures. However, I do recommend the school to be more aware of the IB's strongly Western leanings and to take note of other curricula, especially the Korean, so that the school is in a stronger position to serve the needs of the student body. Likewise, to support TIS students for the future, the school needs to prepare them for a changing world of global economic expansion in which the individual's ability to adapt to change shall provide economic and career benefits (Tsolidis 2002, Davies 2006).

In conclusion, I would like to return to my initial reasons for conducting this research which was the question of how to develop a clearer understanding of parents' and students' perceptions of their international school experience and use the increased understanding to benefit future practice. The study wished to investigate if children are advantaged or disadvantaged by attending international schools. Long-term residents Brian and Diana struggled with deciding on the relative benefits of the international school experience, but they were clear in their belief that the access to languages and intercultural enrichment compensates for potentially academically limiting experiences caused by high turnover of staff, high percentages of non-English speaking students and cultural dissonance within the school. They considered their children's situation as being relative as all children and schools have advantages and disadvantages. This shall continue to be a dilemma for all parents who select an international school education, that of deciding if their children will have a better quality of education than they would in their home country.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Consent Form: Information sheet

Title: An ethnographic investigation of students' and parents' perceptions of their international school experiences.

Researcher: Philip Harrington

In submission of the thesis for my Doctorate of Education at the University of Durham, I am conducting research into perceptions of international school families. Research shall be conducted through interviews. This information sheet is to help you understand what the interview entails. If anything is unclear, please ask. I appreciate your participation in these studies.

The interviews will last 30-60 minutes.

Interviews will be every four to six weeks.

The number of interviews may be between 4 and 8. Interviews will cease when either the researcher or the interviewees feel nothing new is being learnt

Interviews will take place where you and you family feel at ease. This can be at your home or at school. You can decide.

A summary of the researchers findings (based on coding the interviews) will be presented to the interviewees prior to the following interview

The interviews will be recorded (audio)

Your children will be encouraged to be full participants in the interview process.

Your family will be interviewed together.

You and your family shall be encouraged to make notes during and between interviews. These will also be useful for the research and shall only be used with your explicit written consent.

You are free to withdraw your consent and terminate your participation **at any time**

You shall be asked your views about your international school experiences and related topics which may include languages, culture, employment, future plans and life histories.

You can ask any additional questions about the research at any time. You should feel at ease with the interview process.

Thank you for your help and time.

Philip Harrington

Head of Department Languages A

Appendix 2

Consent Form: Participant’s Consent.

Title: An ethnographic investigation of students’ and parents’ perceptions of their international school experiences.

Researcher: Philip Harrington. Durham University, Doctorate of Education.

Please answer all the questions.

I agree to be interviewed in the above stated research study
YES/NO _____

I agree to my children being interviewed as part of the above stated study
YES/NO _____

I understand that the interviews will be recorded and transcribed
YES/NO _____

I understand that all names and other identifying features except my nationality will be changed for the thesis. This is to keep me and my family anonymous.
YES/NO _____

I have had enough time and opportunity to read and understand the “Consent Form: Information sheet”.
YES/NO _____

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and the interviews, and I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions.
YES/NO _____

I understand I am free to withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time
YES/NO _____

I understand I shall be given written summaries of the interviews. I shall also have access to the completed thesis should I wish.
YES/NO _____

This is to confirm that I, (please print name) _____
agree to be a participant in the above stated research.

Signature

Date

Appendix 3
Students' Nationalities by Grade (May 2006)

K1		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Australia	2	5%
Belgium	1	3%
Chinese, HK	1	3%
Finland	1	3%
France	4	11%
Germany	7	19%
Holland	3	8%
Japan	1	3%
Korea	15	41%
Sweden	1	3%
USA	1	3%
Total Number	37	

K2		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Australia	1	6%
Chinese, Taiwan	1	6%
France	1	6%
Germany	3	17%
Italy	1	6%
Korea	6	33%
Singapore	1	6%
Sweden	1	6%
UK	1	6%
USA	2	11%
Total Number	18	

Grade 1		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Argentina	1	3%
Belgium	1	3%
Canada	1	3%
Chinese, Taiwan	1	3%
Germany	5	17%
Japan	1	3%
Korea	12	41%
Singapore	2	7%
Slovenia	1	3%
South Africa	1	3%
USA	3	10%
Total Number	29	

Grade 2		
Nationality	Number	Percent
France	1	4%
Germany	3	12%
Holland	1	4%
Italy	1	4%
Korea	14	56%
Sweden	1	4%
USA	4	16%
Total Number	25	

Grade 3		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Belgium	1	4%
France	2	9%
Germany	5	22%
Holland	1	4%
Korea	9	39%
Malaysia	1	4%
Spain/China	1	4%
USA	3	13%
Total Number	23	

Grade 4		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Australia	1	4%

Belgium	1	4%
France	2	7%
Germany	6	21%
Holland	1	4%
Italy	2	7%
Japan	1	4%
Korea	11	39%
USA	3	11%
Total Number	28	

Grade 5		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Argentina	1	3%
Austria	1	3%
Canada	1	3%
France	1	3%
Germany	4	11%
Holland	1	3%
Italy	2	5%
Korea	15	41%
Malaysia	2	5%
New Zealand	2	5%
Sweden	1	3%
UK	1	3%
USA	5	14%
Total Number	37	

Grade 6		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Australia	1	3%
Austria	1	3%
France	1	3%
Germany	3	9%
Italy	1	3%
Japan	1	3%
Korea	21	66%
Sweden	1	3%
UK	1	3%
USA	1	3%
Total Number	32	

Grade 7		
Nationality	Number	Percent

Australia	2	7%
Germany	1	3%
Japan	1	3%
Korea	21	72%
Malaysia	1	3%
USA	3	10%
Total Number	29	

Grade 8		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Australia	1	4%
Austria	1	4%
Brazil	1	4%
Canada	1	4%
Germany	2	8%
Korea	9	36%
Malaysia	1	4%
Spain	1	4%
Sweden	3	12%
UK	4	16%
USA	1	4%
Total Number	25	

Grade 9		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Australia	1	4%
Austria	1	4%
Germany	1	4%
Holland	1	4%
Korea	13	57%
New Zealand	1	4%
South Africa	1	4%
Spain	1	4%
UK	1	4%
USA	2	9%
Total Number	23	

Grade 10		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Germany	2	9%
Italy	1	5%
Korea	16	72%
Malaysia	1	5%

USA	2	9%
Total Number	22	

Grade 11		
Nationality	Number	Percent
Austria	1	10%
German	1	10%
Korea	5	50%
UK	2	20%
USA	1	10%
Total Number	10	

Grade 12		
Nationality	Number	Percent
German	2	29%
Italy	1	14%
Korea	2	29%
New Zealand	1	14%
USA	1	14%
Total Number	7	

Data collected by TIS admissions officer and compiled by author. Accurate May 1st 2006.

Appendix 4



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Appendix 5 Student nationalities by percentage, grades Pre-K to 12

Nationality	Number	(%)
Argentina	2	0.56%
Australia	9	2.54%
Austria	5*	1.41%
Belgium	4	1.13%
Brazil	1	0.28%
Canada	3	0.85%
China (HK)	3	0.85%
China (Taiwan)	2	0.56%
Finland	1	0.28%
France	13	3.66%
Germany	48	13.52%
Holland	9	2.54%
Italy	9	2.54%
Japan	5	1.41%
Korea	170	47.89%
Malaysia	6	1.69%
New Zealand	4	1.13%
Singapore	3	0.85%
Slovenia	1	0.28%
South Africa	2	0.56%
Spain	3**	0.85%
Sweden	8	2.25%
UK	11	3.10%
USA	33***	9.30%
Total Current Students	355	100.00%

Student nationalities by percentage, grades Pre-K to 12

* Includes two returning Chinese students with Austrian citizenship
** Includes one returning Chinese student with Spanish citizenship
*** Includes five returning Chinese students with American citizenship
Chinese nationals are not allowed to attend the school (Chinese law). Hong Kong and Taiwanese children can attend, but the school must record their nationality as being Chinese

Appendix 6 Teachers Nationalities and Length of Service at TIS

Gender	Nationality	Contact time	Years in education	Years at TIS
F	Australia	100%	9	1
M	Australia	100%	11	2
M	Australia	100%	19	4
F	Australia	100%	26	2
M	Australia	100%	5	2
M	Australia	100%	26	2
F	Australia	100%	26	2
M	Australia	100%	10	2
M	Australia	100%	2	2
F	Australia	100%	6	2
M	Australia	100%	6	2
M	Australia	100%	14	3
M	Australia	100%	11	3
F	Australia	100%	8	3
F	Australia	100%	17	2
F	Australia	100%	16	2
F	Australia	100%	5	4
M	Australia	100%	6	2
F	Burkina Faso	100%	2	1
F	Canada	100%	7	4
F	Canada	100%	25	1
F	China	100%	2	2
F	China	100%	3	3
F	China	100%	3	3
F	China	100%	9	3
F	China	100%	3	3
F	China	100%	4	3
F	China	100%	6	2
F	China	100%	2	2
F	China	100%	5	3
F	China	100%	4	2
F	China	100%	4	4
M	China	20%	31	4
F	China	100%	4	2
F	China	100%	2	2
F	China	100%	8	3
F	China	100%	2	2
F	China	100%	9	4
F	China	100%	5	3
F	China	100%	6	3
M	China	100%	21	2
F	China	100%	13	8
F	China	100%	12	3
M	Germany	50%	9	4

F	Germany	100%	3	1
F	Holland	100%	8	1
M	Holland	100%	7	1
F	Holland	67%	3	1
M	Ireland	100%	12	2
F	Israel	100%	8	1
M	Korea	100%	3	3
M	New Zealand	100%	10	5
F	New Zealand	100%	6	3
F	New Zealand	100%	11	1
F	Poland	100%	8	2
F	South Africa	100%	24	4
F	South African	100%	10	1
F	South Africa	100%	16	4
M	South Africa	100%	20	4
M	UK	100%	16	1
M	UK	100%	4	1
M	UK	100%	28	2
F	UK	100%	21	4
M	UK	100%	26	9
F	UK	100%	9	2
M	UK	100%	24	4
F	UK	100%	27	4
M	USA	100%	8	3
F	USA	100%	5	3
F	USA	100%	19	4
M	USA	100%	24	3
F	USA	100%	20	3

Appendix 7 Sample interviews

(23rd May 2006)

Frank (18 year old Italian) (F1s)

PH I am not going to ask you specific question, I am going to ask you to 'talk about', and then if there is anything you mention which I would like to explain a bit further I shall ask you to do so, first of all, can you talk about international schools?

F well, I have only been to one international school. I came here in grade 9 so my experience has been four years here and – well I think international school gives a different perception about life and the world than schools in Italy and that is because, there are reasons for that, the first one is that this school, obviously, is more – of a practice, you study the theory but put into practice, in Italy is more only theory, only the theory -

PH can you explain what mean about the theory?

F well you just study the books, then maybe in science there are some formulas but you don't try to make them work in experiments, while in China, in the international school, you study the one theory and may do an experiment to testify the calculation, then another thing is you learn another language if you are not a native speaker so I'm Italian so I came here without any English and then within 4 or 5 months I had the opportunity to learn English- to interact with other people- to learn at school - and now in grade 11 and 12 I also studied Chinese and all about Chinese culture and to interact more with Chinese people - so -

PH you say that when you arrived here you had no English.

F I knew a couple of sentences but it was nothing like what I am saying now, so basically I knew how to say 'how are you?' and 'bye bye', an international school has different programmes because not only are there English speaking people but there are foreigners basically and they have to learn English in order to understand, so they have course, yes, courses that help you learn the language and I think that is really great because in Italy there are no specific classes that help you learn Italian if you are from another country.

PH you would have been about 14?

F I was - 14 when I came, yes

PH How might you describe what it was like?

F it wasn't good. It was a whole new environment first of all, new friends, and the biggest problem was the language because I really didn't know what to say because I didn't have enough words to have a dialogue with someone else, - I had erm- I was lucky

because in my class there was this other Italian kid named {name} he helped me a lot, both through learning the language and for making friends basically, that was pretty great

PH what did you see as your biggest challenges and successes at that time?

F well, the biggest challenge was to understand what was going on in the class, coz obviously my English, I didn't really understand it, and I didn't really understand it, and that was my biggest challenge, to understand and communicate – to teachers when I had problems and all that, and success was that after four months, because I arrived in August, and by the time it was Christmas I was able to speak and to understand most of the classes basically, and by that time I already had quite a lot of friends that I could communicate to and I felt grateful for learning a new language -

PH what advice would you give to a new 14 year-old from Italy arriving at an international school?

F - OK first of all I would say to try as hard as they can to learn and communicate with other people and to never give up basically, because I was at one stage where I had enough of everything that was around me and I really want to give up, but then my parents also helped me a lot and they said to me I have to keep on going otherwise I would totally left out, alone so in that way they helped me - to keep on going and that way I made new friends, I kept on studying hard the language and I think it's quite successful now

PH what made you nearly give up?

F the thought that for nearly for four years in China I would have to deal with another culture, another environment, another language and I thought that it would have been too hard to accomplish all these things , to fit into the environment-

PH so you knew you would be here for four years?

F at first I knew I would be here for two years, then my dad made his contract longer, maybe also because I told him I wanted to finish school at China at the international school because I thought the IB programme is fairly - well thought over basically, it gives you a lot of knowledge that you can apply in the future so I said 'Dad, I like China and I wouldn't mind staying at international school to finish my high school'

PH so you are saying you could have gone back to Italy but chose to stay in China?

F yes, after two years I could have gone back to Italy and my dad would have stayed in China, his contract was also already extended but I decided to stay because I like the school and I liked how I lived in China, so –

PH how does that compare to Italy?

F well I don't really know how the life is in Italy because I am from [place name in Italy] but before moving to China I only live one year in [place name in Italy] I only did grade 8 there. I don't really know how life is there, maybe if I knew more about Italy then maybe I would be thinking more about going back or staying.

PH oh I see, so, where do think is home?

F I think China is home now, because in Italy I don't have any friends my age, now that [name] my brother is in Italy for two years, I spend time with his friends, but I don't have any more friends from my class basically, I feel that China is my home - I have all my affections here, I have all my family here except [brother], I have all my best friends are here, all my interests are in China, so when I say I want to go home, I refer to China and not Italy, when I go to Italy it's more like a vacation to me coz we always go there for Christmas and summer vacation, so -

PH how do you think the Italians your age see you?

F erm, that's a good question I think they kind of admire me, a little bit, because none of them have had the opportunity to live abroad for, even for a year and for me I stayed away for four years - and they also admire me because I speak another language - and my vision about the cultures and about the world in general is probably wider than they have, so - I think when they look at me they ask me a lot about China because I think they are really interested about the culture, they ask me to do their English homework and all that, so I think they kind of see me with a different light, let's put it that way - I think it's good, yeah -

PH what do you think are the main differences between the international schools and schools in Italy?

F like I said before, there is the whole theoretical and practical aspect to it, and then - I am referring only to this school as it is the only international school I have been to, so another difference is the teachers are more friends than teachers within the international school community because the classes are smaller, in Italy the classes are, I think they have to be 22, to 28, 29 kids, so they have really big classes, and within the classes in Italy they form groups of friends which always hang out together and they don't interact with other people, and teachers in Italy they don't really, they are not friends with the students, if they have a problem with a kid they try to help, but if the problems still remains with the kid they don't do anything and just move on, while in China classes are really small, my class only has 7 people, and we have different subjects, so basically example I am the only one doing Italian in my case and if I have a problem, I can talk to my teacher and she can give me advice and tell me what to do - so that is another main difference, teachers are more friends than teachers, even though there is still a lot of respect for the teachers coz teachers are the ones that give you the knowledge basically,

PH I don't know if this is something you can answer, but do you think the people who set up or run an international school have a different purpose to people who set up or run a state school?

F I think that teachers that set up an international school, I think the main reason for that, in China is that the language is probably too hard to learn because there are people who only stay one or two years and they want to have the kid to gain some knowledge and the best way to do it is to send the kid to school, because it's small it's easier to learn the language and to gain some knowledge about different subjects while state schools I think there is just the need of state school I think, and since they are public they also cost a lot less than international schools and – parents who don't earn much money, they have the possibility to give the kid – enough knowledge to have a job in the future, I think that's the main reason.

PH now we have covered the four areas I wanted to talk about in different ways, maybe we can finish by looking at international life? How would you describe the way you live here?

F - erm, I live in a hotel, I don't know - erm.

PH if you were trying to explain this to somebody in Italy, what your life is like and where you live, how would you explain it to them

F I have been asked this question. They asked me to tell them how my day is, so basically you describe to them, what a day is like, you get up, in the morning and go to school, you learn your stuff for school and then you go home and then when there is time you go out to do some shopping to places where expatriates go, because that's where you find, let's say clothes that are the same in Italy in my case, so we go there to shop, but not to hang out with Chinese people also because there is the language barrier, so it's really hard to communicate with Chinese people if we do not know the language, and also at night on the few occasions that we go out, we always stay with international students from TIS so there is not much connection with Chinese people

PH do you think this is all because of the 'language barrier'?

F I would say so yes, for example if we lived in Spain there is probably more chance to learn enough vocabularies to talk in Spanish and therefore you could probably meet enough friends in Spain to hang out with them, but in China since the language is so hard, it is probably harder to do that, so basically when, also when my parents go out they go out they always stay with their friends and not Chinese people, when my dad, when he does spend some time with Chinese people it is mostly because of his work the interaction of the Italian and the Chinese side that run the industry, you see –

PH that's great, thank you

F no worries

(18th June 2006)

Brian (parent German) (B1a)

PH thank you very much for agreeing to take part - the first area we can talk about is international schools, what can you tell me about your experiences and views of international schools?

B ok, I mean, my family and I arrived in [place name] in 94, that time there wasn't an international school, we tried to send our kid into - erm - Chinese kindergarten, it was a model kindergarten and [son] came in the first evening and told us that he wouldn't do that kind of crap, and then we decided basically to gather with our friends and open an international school and from the beginning we were deeply involved and we didn't have an idea about how to go about it, so we gathered from the Chinese side what kind of legal requirements there are, but as for the school itself, I mean we figured out very early that if you have 8 families you have at least 8 different ideas about how to run it, what to do with the teaching especially if they are from different country backgrounds, erm, so in the beginning I was involved in the day to day running of the school but I pulled out very early because of the time requirements and it was just too much, at the time we couldn't decide on the curriculum or the different national interests, but we knew that the language would be English the teaching language and even some people contested that part - so basically we tried to institute a professional director, something like that for the school at a very early stage, and once that was in place it was a self-runner and we accepted how it was done, that took about four years after the initial steps -

PH what was the purpose of the international school?

B the purpose was very self serving, I mean we had in our family two kids, friends of ours had three children who had to go to school and then there was another family with four children at the time, two of them going to school, so basically it was to serve our immediate needs I mean our company sent us to work here, there wasn't much, most people at that time, it wasn't a question of choice, there is a question of choice but it is do you want to go to [place name] or this lovely place near Moscow, so I mean- there's a limited choice and you are ending up in places where there might not be infrastructures suiting your family and then you have to build something up or you decide to live separately, many people at the time did that, many companies had policies that they would only send people to [place name] if there were children that they could arrange, or if they didn't have children or weren't married or the kids were at the house, or something like that

PH what do you see as the main differences between international schools and national schools?

B it depends on what kind of national school you are talking about, I mean I am from Germany so the German system is completely different to the system we run in this

school and- so you are talking that for many parent it's coming from a completely different system, how the school is run, how kids progress from one stage to the next like the secondary and primary school system is completely different in Germany, so for many of my German colleagues coming to China and coming to this school is a big shock because they have, the first question is how do I ever get my kids back into the German system, that's the biggest worry, so we decided at a very early stage not to bother about it, just try to get the kids through school, we couldn't see how long we would stay here, we wanted to stay a longer time but for most of my German colleagues before they arrive and when they are here it is a constant question how to get the kids back into the German system

PH looking at the second area, international life, it might be useful when talking about it to say what relative advantages and disadvantages to international life compared to what you might have had.

B for me the choice was pretty obvious because both I and Diana majored in Asian Studies so the choice to come to China was obvious but it wasn't easy to get here in the first place, I mean we first stayed in Germany for some years and then in the United States for four years and then we came to China, I mean for us personally living abroad then brings some advantages and some disadvantages, the advantages I would say is we can stay in the country which we choose as the object of our studies, at the time also which we have a certain affection and we think we understand maybe better than other foreigners, so basically they are from my working side, I mean I have this understanding that other people don't have or I think I have it, it's like an advantage which is worth a certain amount of money, so that's a big advantage, which makes working here and living here a bit more attractive than staying in Germany- besides that I mean I we just enjoy the friendships we have here with local people and also with some people out of the foreign community- the disadvantages of course are that you are separated from your natural environment where you grew up and your family and stuff like that, I mean this is especially hard when your parents get older and you should look after them when someone is dying - I mean you try to do something about it by calling, using the telephone very often and that, so for many years my own parents were quite old, my father just passed away a couple of months ago, they felt that we are very close, because they know from the village where they live that some of their friends in their age group, they had grandchildren in the village 20km and never saw them, never heard from them, they just turned up for Christmas to pick up their presents while from us we call once a week or twice a week and we spend a long time on the phone and that also creates an element of closeness, so I think if you want you can do quite a lot to get a satisfied life -

PH you mentioned that because you have been here for a long period of time you have an advantage over those who perhaps are only here for short amounts of time

B because we majored in, we studied in China in 82 to 84

PH studied in China?

B yes and speaking the language definitely helps, I think that if you work here and don't speak the language it's like swimming on the soup, you only see so much of the bottom, and you are very much - information you live with is very much filtered by the Chinese media anyway and filtered by the gossip of the international circles in which you move, I'm not talking about the news, it's just like 'how is life about? what are they doing here? how do people think?' that kind of thing - I mean stay here a long time you start to have a normal relationship with these people then you don't feel that there is such a huge difference, it is more difficult if I would have to sit and elaborate the differences, that would be difficult, I mean I started that when I did my MBA, somehow you have to think about it, what is it that is so fantastically different about it - so I think it is - things get more normal, you get a certain degree of normality about staying here -

PH ok, that's great, the next two areas may be connected but I want to find out about language and culture and one of the reasons I wanted to talk to you family is because of your mix of languages in the home, how would you describe your family's language situation?

B from the outside it looks definitely a bit messy, from the very beginning when I met my wife we spoke English between the two of us- erm- I speak, from the very beginning, we decided that each of us would speak his or her mother language with the children and that is what we are consistently doing, I never basically spoke English to my children so I always spoke German from the very first day- and I think it worked out not too badly and they answer me in German, I mean they start to speak German at a rather later stage, correct German, Charles, the oldest one had the advantage that he also could spend at least two months with his grandparents in Germany so his German is perfect, I mean he doesn't make the mistakes which foreigners normally do with the articles, Susan didn't spend as much time with her grandparents because at that time they were very much advanced age, so there is bit of a lag but I guess it is a question of time when you have more logical understanding and you can self correct yourself- and the smallest one is two, two and a half, he mainly speaks Chinese because he is together with the Ayi a lot, but he understands both English and German quite well, I mean sometimes I try to test him, I ask him bring me this or bring me that, then he does it, so he must have the passive vocabulary of most of the things he knows in all three languages- so we try to be quite relaxed about languages and - as something that - you are never perfect in any language either foreign or your own there is always something which you don't know, especially in Asian languages you realise that when it comes down to writing no Chinese can write everything correctly, no Chinese can read you aloud a full page of a newspaper, it's just not, you know, everyone will have some doubts about something so it is just an accepted area of error, it doesn't mean they don't understand what's written down, it's just that some are not 100% perfect, and that's the way we handle it with the kids, I mean we try to give them, since they are together with the Chinese Ayi and we live together like in a family, we don't make much differences, we have the same group of people employed here since we arrived here, it's like they come out of the same family background, same families, so basically they know everything about us, we know quite a

lot, most of the stuff about them, they share our life to quite a far degree and our children know them like parts of the family, it's not like someone we just swap if things turn a bit funny, or if they have, we feel they should do things a bit better, and so that helps the whole linguistic kind of set up of the children I think-

PH OK, and the last area, like I say is similar because of the mix, and that is culture, how would you describe your family's culture?

B I would say it is quite a mixed thing- I don't know, I mean culture is not just books you're reading or music you hear- it's something of our own very much because I mean we threw things together from different places and different experiences and erm- I mean of course we allude ourselves to live in China and with the Chinese society but I know very well it is like an island, you are very much in your own world, which you have built up - it's like circles where you have part of everything and circles which cover each other, take part of something, I think it's important to see that you are only a part of it and these things are shifting all the time, that's how I see it, that you are, in certain times of life, you have certain people who you are living with from different areas, from different cultures, you take up things, beliefs and – ethics, some habits and stuff like that which make up the culture of the family, I think our children are very much influenced by the international school, that's their main area of living except for the family, the family, my wife and I and what we have here in the house is a mixture of different European and American influences, I mean – for us it would be difficult to reinsert ourselves into any particular European country, last I was in Germany I thought it was quite an exotic country if you look at it from that perspective, if you have the ability to take a step back, I mean they are quite funny and I think this is, I am quite happy to be able to look at it from that perspective, to see that you have a little bit of a distance to your own background, that you can say ok it'd not all gold, whereas here some things are more, people can be nicer to each other than other countries, here everything is organised but people can be rather cold to each other, things like that which you feel, which you don't feel before you had the experience of something else, the reflection of something, if you mirror your culture with something else, your experience against something else, I don't know, basically it is the culture which we live in our family is a mixture of everything-

PH OK, that's great thank you.

different dates?

Tree Node - changing schools
Changing School?

From Nvivo 7 tree Node:

This needs re coding!

<Documents\Interview transcripts\Interview 1 21st May 2006 Diana and Susan> - § 4 references coded [15.52% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.72% Coverage

I as a parent, from the parent's point of view have found the kind of education that the children have had from these types of school to be mainly a positive one, because the class have been small, small schools

Reference 2 - 2.12% Coverage

Parents have tended to see that as a negative thing I have seen that as a positive thing because if you have a teacher who is used to multi level teaching they can still manage to tailor the education the children get to the children's needs

small schools - tailor for child's needs -

Reference 3 - 5.15% Coverage

No common policy restricts.

some very negative views

D1 Well I know this is quite specific to TIS, and there are different views on this. I know we have, I think it is 40% Korean student body, and I am one of those parents and I don't mean that I say everything positively but it one of these things you hear, 'the challenge of the Korean expatriate community' but I think it's been great, it's been an eye opener for me. I don't see it as dragging this school down at all, that's just the nature of the school body, the school wouldn't be the size it wasn't 40% Korean, it would probably still be in an old hotel building adding on classroom by classroom, Cultural clash - only school in town -

Reference 4 - 6.53% Coverage

Two of C's friends told me that it is not just the difficulty of getting into university in Korea, but also the fact that you are looked at differently by your Korean peers, by everyone really in Korean society when you go back, 'what, you lived abroad? and you went to an international school and you didn't even go to Korean school there?' and automatically they look down at you and hopefully that will change with the years, that suddenly it will turn and it will be 'oh you are lucky to have gone through a system like that,' but I think it is because their education system is so strict and so laden with pressure that they have to go through that but I think that should make us feel lucky that we, when I say we, other nationalities -

follow up with M.

don't mention literature yet!!!
return home problems of reintegration

see John + Linda

why so strict?

contrast

<Documents\Interview transcripts\Interview 1 23rd may Frank> - § 1 reference coded [2.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.95% Coverage

well I think international school gives a different perception about life and the world than schools in Italy and that is because, there are reasons for that, the first one is that this school, obviously, is more - of a practice, you study the theory but put into practice, in Italy is more only theory, only the theory -

Actual place for different perceptions
Interactional. It happens in practice rather than talked about.

<Documents\Interview transcripts\Interview 1 26th May 2006 James> - § 5 references coded
[17.66% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.94% Coverage

One thing which is a probably a negative aspect of international schools is - that everybody does speak their own language and there are usually people who speak the same language and - so language is used sometimes as a tool to exclude people from conversations - or - but - people talk behind other peoples' backs because they can and because other people do not understand - I don't know, that just came to mind

language
exclude

Reference 2 - 2.62% Coverage

J If, for example, if the German people at the school. I don't know, if they have an argument or have a fight with another nationality, two Germans might speak to each other in German because they know the other people can not understand because they don't speak the language

excludes/bulies!

language
excludes

Reference 3 - 4.54% Coverage

J I don't know reducing cultural prejudices I guess, reducing clichés things you think, you know Germans are always on time and then you meet a couple of Germans and they are always late - and - ok actually it is not just the little bits of language you learn, for example we are around a lot of Koreans and before I came here I never tried Korean food and just because there are 40% Korean at the school I got to experience Korean food tastes like and that's pretty cool

interculturalism:
- knowing different cultures/nationalities

Reference 4 - 0.34% Coverage

PH And do you have Korean friends?

Reference 5 - 6.22% Coverage

J Yes I have Korean friends, yes - before I came here I had only met one Korean person in my life and I can't say I was friends with them - and ok and also what I like about this school is we are very open to our host country's culture, we embrace Chinese culture, and Chinese is taught as a subject and we have Chinese assemblies and we celebrate Chinese New Year where we do - Chinese things (laughs) and I think that is great because even though there are people from all over the world in this school we do have a natural environment going - we are still not rejecting or ignoring our host countries culture, and I think that's a positive aspect

cultural identity through food.

how do we embrace China
Assemblies - still is bubble effect - ostracism
celebration
but makes effort.

school
content

<Documents\Interview transcripts\Interview 1 30th May 2006 Linda> - § 15 references coded
[70.43% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.55% Coverage

host country

guests - certain expectations
of behaviour

2

report

pen to
positive
out

references

book
times

is
important

is a challenge
in
service

expectations - (not social or physical? only language?)

strict uniform regulations for appearance

I find it really interesting to go here because I Never went to international schools before and four years ago I used to go to girls' middle school in Korea and it was very strict and I had to wear all these uniforms and I had to have my hair 3cm off my shoulders (laughs) - and when I first came here I thought - pretty much I would have some problems in English because English is not my native language

Reference 2 - 2.70% Coverage

contrasts to strict

L2 international school what I am really amazed about is how free I am because when I was in Korea I had to do what everyone else was doing like costume, the uniform, the hair and the regulations - and I also had to wear badges too (laughs)

Reference 3 - 2.15% Coverage

contrasts.

In Korea because you have to study, you have to do everything that your teacher tells you, you have to follow the school rules and you are forced to do everything even if you don't feel like do

Reference 4 - 12.18% Coverage

this is the same as int. school - so why does Linda say they are different?

L Since I have been in Middle school, and that is when the Koreans start to pay attention and work hard and Korean student go to academy right after school so they come home after 12 o'clock after studying and then some of them study longer if they want to, and here it is so different because you don't have to do such kind of thing, but in Korea you have to be like that to be good at studying but here it is different, it matters how much you try and how much you understand - why is 'understanding' different?

L yeah also the school system is different in Korea there would be mid terms and final exams and here we get assessment a lot, like all the time that's the difference because Korean students I'd say they really try that hard till the exam comes and then two weeks or three weeks before the exam they study and study, but here it is more like assessment and they also give you chances to cooperate with your friends, to communicate so here we have students from different cultures and countries and I think it is better if we work together because we get to understand much more and then we get to communicate

exam driven

? continual assessment? emphasis on cultural sharing in work?

Reference 5 - 12.28% Coverage

L Yes, because I am living in a country where they speak English all the time so I have to speak English to live there, but here there are a lot of Koreans here and Koreans are friends with Koreans mostly, so the main problem that Korean people have here because that doesn't really help them increase their English ability and also you don't get to understand what the others are talking about and it forms a different culture in the whole school,

Language issue due to dominant number.

It's just a different part of a group of people who are Koreans, and the other are just 'oh they are Koreans and they are talking Korean all the time' I hate that (laughs).

2 issues < not learn English do not interact Koreans

Less English learners Less cultural Acceptance of cultural divide others as normal

but also the friend, he also went to America to study English but I would say my English is much better than his - in my opinion think it is because I try harder because I don't be one of those Koreans who gather around and just talk Korean all the time - so I try to improve my English and I have friend who are not from the same culture and that helps me a lot and we spend time altogether in school and that is like, I don't know, so many hours, that is pretty helpful.

try hard

peer pressure

peer pressure

effort - study

to break away

friendship out of Korean group

Reference 7 - 4.03% Coverage

L Grade 10- because he always hangs out with his Korean friends, I always have Korean friends but what it is in my class we talk in English mostly, so I think it is also, like, different in that case, like in my English class everyone is Korean, everyone is from Korea but we never speak Korean, we always speak English in English classes, that's also helpful

Reference 8 - 2.81% Coverage

L I don't think so - I don't think so. So my brother's English is not so good - I think another reason is he hangs out with Korean friends all the time and does not really talk in English unless the teacher asks him to answer a question or something

Reference 11 - 4.28% Coverage

L yeah they could be because they are so isolated from the whole school sort or - even when they are doing- what's a good example? - I don't know they just behave like Korean, in a Korean way but in other people's eyes they wouldn't really, because we have different cultures and backgrounds we wouldn't understand each other so well - so that would be the problem that Koreans have

Reference 12 - 4.59% Coverage

L I would like to live in Korea, I am Korean, it's not like I haven't been there for a short time it's just that - I don't feel like a Korean - in some cases because - like mostly I am speaking English the whole day with friends and it's just I am speaking Korean at home and - I do homework in English or work, so my ways of thinking, it is just turning into some different culture kind of thing (laughs) -

Reference 13 - 12.26% Coverage

L They want me to live in Canada because they think for me it's much better to, for jobs and everything, in Korea they don't want me to, because I speak English, I speak Chinese a little, they don't want me to waste that, and they think it is not really good to live in Korea because Korea, there is not much future, so it's like to be successful it's much better to live in America or Canada or Europe-

to be successful → America or Europe

Dominant culture of school

Economic dominance.

and I really going to international schools because I get to do a lot of things I have never done before, so it's a lot of experience that I get - for example productions, school productions, I never thought I would join or I never thought I would have chance to be involved in school production in Korea because we don't have such things and also International Day - those are really good opportunities to get to know the other countries and experiences and also - ACAMIS, ACAMIS is a real good chance to get to meet people and get experience.

In Korea there is nothing like that, all Korean students do is study, they also have festivals but it's not even for a week, just two days or so -

Internationalism - this student is very positive about intercultural opportunities

Reference 14 - 1.84% Coverage

PH Given the large amount of Korean students at this school and the fact that there is only one Korean teacher, do you think this creates any kind of difficulties?

Reference 15 - 4.95% Coverage

L There could be coz Korean students cause problems a lot because they have problems with communicating mostly with other students and Mr [name] the teacher is trying to solve every thing, everything that Korean societies likely to have and I think that is a lot of pressure for him because it's just that - the main problem Korean students have is communicating they do not understand what people from other cultures think about them or -

Language barrier

Lack of cultural communication

<Documents\Interview transcripts\Interview 1 with Brian 18th June 2006> - § 1 reference coded [7.12% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.12% Coverage

I am from Germany so the German system is completely different to the system we run in this school and- so you are talking that for many parent it's coming from a completely different system, how the school is run, how kids progress from one stage to the next like the secondary and primary school system is completely different in Germany,

different

different to parents' previous experiences

so for many of my German colleagues coming to China and coming to this school is a big shock because they have, the first question is how do I ever get my kids back into the German system. that's the biggest worry, so we decided at a very early stage not to bother about it, just try to get the kids through school, we couldn't see how long we would stay here,

short term

shock return compatibility

we wanted to stay a longer time but for most of my German colleagues before they arrive and when they are here it is a constant question how to get the kids back into the German system

<Documents\Interview transcripts\Interview 1 with Roxan June 12th 2006> - § 4 references coded [17.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.42% Coverage

short term mentality v long term